

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

RESEARCH COMMITTEE
11:00, Monday 7 December 2020, via Zoom

MINUTES

Attendees

Professor Lorraine Leeson, Associate Dean of Research (Chair)
Professor Andrew Bowie, Associate Dean of Research
Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business
Professor Ruth Barton, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts
Professor David O'Shaughnessy, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Dan Geary, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Clemens Ruthner, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor Redmond O'Connell, Director of Research, School of Psychology
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 Zohar Hadromi-Allouche, Director of Research, School of Religion
Faculty of Engineering, Maths and Science
Professor Ed Lavelle, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Professor Declan O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Gareth Bennett, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Jane Farrar, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Stefan Sint, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Faculty of Health Sciences
Professor Jeff O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor AnneMarie Brady, on behalf of Director of Research, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Professor Lidia Tajber, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Kingston Mills, Director of TBSI
Professor Aideen Long, Director of Trinity Translational Medicine Institute
Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director of TCIN
Professor Eve Patten, Director of Trinity Long Room Hub

Gisèle Scanlon, President, Graduate Students Union
Dr Darren Fayne, Trinity Research Staff Association

In attendance:

Dr Raquel Cabral Harper, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library
Dr Fiona Killard, Head of Strategic Research Development, Office of the Dean of Research
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Office of the Dean of Research

Apologies

Professor Marcus Collier, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies
Professor Joan Lalor, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services
Professor Irene Walsh, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

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Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	<p>Minutes Minutes of previous meeting of November 10th were circulated in advance, and accepted as read.</p>
A.2	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>RS/20-21/2 HEA Support for COVID-19 Related Research Costed Extensions Committee was advised that over 240 applications had been received. Thanks were noted to Dr Fiona Killard, Gwen Turner in HR and Elaine Sharkey in FSD for their continued work on this. FK confirmed that a second funding round would be announced in early 2021, and it was hoped the eligibility could be expanded.</p> <p>RS/19-20/3 Postdoc Teaching & Employment Contracts ADOR Leeson updated the committee on responses received for the postdoc teaching survey that was circulated after the last meeting of the committee. As was expected there was a wide variation across schools. Committee agreed to reopen the survey to allow schools who had not responded to submit information. ADORS advised they would then take the survey results to HR in the new year with a view to resolving the issue. Members of the committee again noted frustration that this issue had still not been resolved. It was noted that Trinity’s current position creates systemic barriers to postdocs’ career advancement and actively disadvantages them when applying for positions.</p> <p>RS/20-21/4 Research Ethics management system It was noted that the financial plan and the outline presentation did not go to the December meeting of the Capital Review Group. These will be submitted to the CRG meeting on January 13 instead. The delay has enabled further refinement of the business case with additional input from PMO, ITS, and FSD.</p>
A.3	<p>RS/20-21/5 Policy on Good Research Practice Lorraine Leeson</p> <p>A draft of the updated policy on Good Research Practice was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. ADOR Leeson advised that the draft was not as complete as had been hoped and invited any feedback the committee had. Noted that the document had last been updated in 2014 and major changes such as GDPR, Health Regulations etc, had occurred since then that needed to be incorporated into the updated document. LL acknowledged the work of Prof. Gabrielle McKee in liaising with colleagues across College in the process of updating the policy.</p> <p>The committee noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that the current statement relating to duplicate publication of data from the same study would cause significant problems for some disciplines given established practices such as publishing initial findings, pre-prints etc. Suggested that wording around this should be refined. • The policy could include a statement regarding selective reporting of findings or ‘p-hacking’.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy did not explicitly mention the integration of the gender dimension, nor did it include reference to inclusivity and diversity. Suggested that the European Commission’s wording around incorporation of gender dimension could be worked into the document. • Language regarding what constitutes “sensitive data” needed to be clarified as it would have implications for determining whether studies are high or low risk. • The policy only referred to Open Scholarship once, and would benefit from referring to NORF, NORF2, college strategies etc. • The process to declare a conflict of interest needed to be clearly outlined. • The policy currently states that researchers have to complete GDPR training every year which would be quite onerous. <p>LL thanked the committee for their feedback and advised the policy would be brought back for approval once complete.</p>
<p>A.4</p>	<p>Terms of Reference Associate Deans of Research</p> <p>Following on from discussion at the previous meeting regarding the Terms of Reference, amendments were presented to the committee and agreed by all.</p>
<p>Section B - Items for Discussion Only</p>	
<p>B.1</p>	<p>Update from Associate Deans of Research Lorraine Leeson, Andrew Bowie</p> <p>Congratulations were noted to the recipients of Trinity Innovation Awards 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provost Innovation Award to Kingston Mills; • The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Professor Peter Humphries. • Dr Sarah Doyle and Dr Marco Ruffini were recognised with the ‘One to Watch’ Award, • The Societal Impact Award - Professor Aideen Long, from Trinity’s Translational Medicine Institute accepted the award on behalf of her colleagues. • The Inventors Award went to both Dr Vincent Kelly and to Dr Bruce Murphy, • The Industry Engagement Award went to Professor Maeve Lowery and Dr Frederick Sheedy. <p>Four spin out companies, which had attained campus company status in 2020, were also recognised: Senoptica; Way2B; Akara Robotics; and Calibre AI.</p> <p>The committee was advised that expressions of interest were currently being sought for membership of a National Research Ethics Committee until January 11th.</p> <p>AB provided the committee with an update on the All-Ireland funding strategy. The VPDORs group of IUA submitted a document to the Dept of Further and Higher Education outlining existing synergies and opportunities for North-South collaboration. It was noted that a funding call relating to all-island centres was likely in the next year. It was also noted that the only level of detail relating to possible themes so far was based on the three pillars of a green island, a healthy island, and a fair and prosperous island.</p> <p>AB advised the committee that the issues relating to SFI export control clauses had been resolved, and it was assumed that everyone impacted had now received their letters of offer.</p>

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RS/19-20/6 European Researchers' Night

Jennifer Daly provided an update on Trinity's European Researchers' Night (START) events which took place on November 27th. Most events around Europe, including Trinity's, were almost entirely online.

- Had around 60 live sessions across 27 separate activities/events which ran over the two weeks leading up to the 27th
- The START homepage was viewed just under 12,000 times in the month of November, with an additional 17,000 views across various other START-related webpages
- Ran specific activities for primary schools which were very popular and generally over-subscribed. Had schools from all over Ireland join workshops
- Very difficult to get engagement on activities aimed at adults, but this was a common experience across all ERNs, but did see people joining from UK, US, Australia and elsewhere so moving online opened up new audiences in spite of the difficulties getting people to log on
- Good spread across all three faculties. Breakdown of researchers involved in proposing/leading activities was 2:1 female, and most of those who got involved were early career researchers

JD confirmed that she was working on the grant proposal for ERN2021 which was due to be submitted in January 2021.

RS/19-20/15 Research Boost Funding

Following the last meeting of the committee in November, ADORs met with the Provost to relay the committee's objections and concerns, and discussed the need to ensure the continuation of the research boost fund. ADORs advised that the Provost agreed that access to such funds would be important for preparing people to engage in programmes like Horizon Europe, and that it would support morale. ADORs advised the committee that the Provost had a strong desire to have the TR&I/RDO strategy in place before the beginning of 2021. ADORs had noted that any proposal in this area should come to the Research Committee in line with College protocol, but that there appeared to be some reluctance in this regard.

The committee again noted its concerns relating to how this process had been handled so far. It was noted that the committee's funds were very important, and gave great flexibility to the research community. The committee felt it was inappropriate to be instructed to shape its activities in line with a proposed strategy that none of the committee members had yet seen or been given the opportunity to feed into.

The committee also noted that schools had not been given the opportunity to see the proposed strategy and expressed concerns that a document would be presented as a fait accompli with no opportunity for feedback by those who would be significantly impacted by it.

The committee noted that strategies of the magnitude that was being proposed take a long time to move through the proper College processes and even with the urgency of Horizon Europe commencing in January 2021 it would be impossible to have a new strategy fully approved at this late stage, or possibly even before the election of a new Provost. Members of the committee also expressed frustration with the manner in which this was being rushed through at a time when the College community is already over-taxed and stretched, and extraordinary measures were still in place as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

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	<p>Leonard Hobbs, Director of TR&I, noted that it was inaccurate to refer to the document as a 'TR&I strategy' and advised that it was in fact a college-wide strategy and was still in development. The committee noted concern that a strategy that was still "in development" had already had an impact on its activities before it had been approved, and repeated its request for the strategy to be brought to the committee for approval. LH advised that the Provost had already agreed to this.</p> <p>ACTION: Strategy to be brought to the committee for discussion and approval</p>
B.2	<p>RS/20-21/6 RPAMS 2 Gavin McDermott</p> <p>Gavin McDermott joined the meeting to provide the committee with an overview of the new RPAMS2 system. The committee noted that this was a positive development and expressed thanks to Gavin and TR&I for their work on the project. It was noted that sign-off process would be somewhat improved, but that a certain amount of sign-offs would still be required. It was also confirmed that data reporting would be much easier, and that the system was intended to cater for any type of grant that might come to Trinity.</p>
Section C – Items for Noting	
C.1	Items for Noting
C.2	<p>Items for future discussion</p> <p>ADORs advised that Brexit-related research issues were an ongoing concern, but that no substantive discussion could be brought to committee before it was known what kind of Brexit was in place.</p> <p>LL asked if the committee would like to restart the school research spotlights. All agreed. Brian Lucey to present on behalf of Trinity Business School at January meeting.</p>
C.3	AOB