

**Research Committee**  
**Minutes of 21 May 2004**

- Present:** Michael Gibney (Dean of Research), Doris Alexander, David Dickson, Dermot McAleese, John Saeed, Deirdre Savage, Jim Sexton
- In Attendance:** Jim Ryan (CIRCA), Ian Robertson, Valerie Smith
- Apologies:** Michael Coey, Sheila Greene, Dermot Kelleher, Margaret O'Mahony, Clive Williams
- Not Present:** John Dillon, Michael Dowling

**1. Minutes of the meeting of 02 April 04**

The minutes were amended and approved by the Chair. In Section 6, it was clarified that the issues identified in the Research Centre Forum document were discussion items only and that no decision had been made by the Research Committee in this regard. It was also clarified that Jim Sexton had acted as Chair for that meeting.

**2. Matters Arising**

**Research Committee Funding Schemes**

The Chair explained that the funding requested between this year's two Research Committee Funding Schemes (Emergency and Start-Up Funds) was within the budget available. It was agreed that the Emergency Fund be capped at €25,000 and that all departments would receive what they requested, up to this amount. Likewise, all those eligible would receive what they requested from the Start-Up fund, up to a maximum of €5,000.

**SFI President of Ireland Young Investigators Scheme**

The process through which TCD researchers were selected to be put forward for the SFI President of Ireland Young Researcher Awards was outlined. Twelve candidates were interviewed by a panel, and five (the maximum allowed by SFI) were chosen to submit a proposal to SFI. The high calibre of all applicants was noted. A condition of this programme is that the host institute offer a permanent position to each candidate selected by SFI, once the five-years of the SFI funding are finished. It was noted that this may become a major problem in the future, if the scheme continues on this basis.

### **3. Research Performance Output**

Dr Jim Ryan from CIRCA outlined his proposal to 'Review Research Performance Indicators in International use and present to Staff'. The background to this is the need for college to have set Performance Indicators, and the recognition that these cannot be universally applied, and may be different between different disciplines. The specific tasks are as follows:

- i. Review the range of performance indicators used in representative high performing colleges worldwide
- ii. Present the options, and their rationale, to college staff for discussion and review
- iii. Assist in the development and validation of an agreed set of performance indicators for staff.

Dr Ryan will concentrate of the first task for the present time. He has been in touch with the US Society of Research Administrators (SRA), and been given permission to contact their members. The European University Association (EUA) also has a set of broad metrics for teaching that could be examined.

The process should make reference to 'disciplines' rather than 'departments'. Mike Gibney (Dean of Research) will talk to other Deans to present possible 'Discipline' areas and get their feedback.

It is important that our research sponsors be included, and that they accept the proposed Performance Indicators, as this would avoid any duplication where they are also making requests for information on performance and output.

The process used to define indicators should be outlined so that they can be modified if necessary at a later date.

Discussion ensued on target audiences, whether the focus should be on centres or disciplines, and so on. Jim Ryan should receive a copy of the Centres Forum Document.

It was decided that the scoping of practices in research institutes would be carried out first, and then further discussion could take place to work out the details.

It was noted that research productivity and student numbers are used as the underlying resource allocation model in the strategic plan due to be implemented on October 2005.

### **4. Implementing the Research Plan**

A draft report pulling together the four research themes which have been identified to coincide with the College's strategic plan was presented to the committee. This report is not the final version. The health science plan final version needs to be

incorporated into the document and an executive summary added. It was accepted that this document cannot be advanced until more is known or has been decided about the proposed structural and management changes in college. It was agreed that this document gives a good overview of what the College does in terms of research.

A period of consultation (through the website) with faculty deans and provost was suggested and following this a note to board and council outlining that the committee approves the structures in the document but that work on the implementation still needs to be addressed.

A further suggestion was made that two versions of the document be developed. One version would show how the situation is now, and this document could be developed into a glossy brochure, with a life-span of about two years. This would have a cost implication. A second version would show what the situation could be in an ideal world, highlighting some of the important research-related issues. This version should be forwarded to the Murray Commission.

## **5. Research Centre Forum**

Jim Sexton gave a brief summary of the document on Research Centres. The committee thanked the working groups for the effort they put into this report, and congratulated them on a very useful and comprehensive document.

Issues of staff entitlements in college are not just restricted to centres, and a member of the staff office has been contacted with a view to explaining to the Research Committee what entitlements staff have to have. Research sponsors do not seem to be aware of these entitlements and this issue needs to be highlighted to CHIU.

It was agreed that some of the issues brought up this document should go into the discussions about the restructuring of the college. However, there are some issues in the document which need to be clarified and amended. Deirdre Savage agreed to highlight particular sections of concern, and pointed out that the Senior Lecturer should have a chance to give her views on the document. The Dean of Research is to elicit the view of the Senior Officers Group in College. It was also agreed that some more positive issues could be highlighted in the document.

This document is a discussion document, seeking to raise issues for consideration. A front page should be added, with a title to the effect of 'Concepts for Discussion'. Further comments should be sent to Jim Sexton.

## **6. Proposals for New Research Centres**

### ***Centre for Contemporary Irish History (CCIH)***

The CCIH comes under the third typology of centres 'Larger centres'. It receives no funding itself, but hosts many individually funded projects within it. It resides within the Department of History's Cost Centre.

### ***Hamilton Mathematics Institute, TCD***

The Hamilton Mathematics Institute, TCD comes under the second typology of centres 'Research unit'. Its role is in identifying inter-disciplinary strengths, and it is looking for more funding at present. It will work on an outreach basis, going out meeting students. The Institute resides within the school of mathematics.

The committee approved both Centres' proposals. The proposals should now proceed to the Council and the Board for approval (there are no financial implications, so they do not need to go to the Finance Committee).

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **Women's Research Day**

Information on this day should be sent to all the women who submitted expressions of interest for the Research Element of the Strategic Plan.

The next meeting will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 2 p.m. on Thursday 24 June 2004.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_