

The University of Dublin

Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 18 May 2006

- Present Ian Robertson (Dean of Research, DoR), Doris Alexander, Alison Donnelly, Jane Ohlmeyer, Philip Lane, Ryan Sheridan (President of the Graduate Students' Union), Nigel Biggar
- Apologies Grace Dempsey (Treasurer), Colm Kearney (Senior Lecturer), Dermot Kelleher, Marina Lynch, Patrick Prendergast (Dean of Graduate Studies), Brian Sweeney, Clive Williams (Bursar), David Lloyd (Associate Dean of Research, ADoR)
- Observer Khurshid Ahmad
- In attendance Maria Treanor, Jennifer Edmond

RS/05-06/43 Minutes of meeting held on 06 April 2006

The Minutes were approved and signed.

RS/05-06/44 Matters Arising from the Minutes

RS/05-06/31: the Dean of Research will seek input from key people on the paper "Review, Agree and Articulate College Policy on Service Contracts and Contract Research Activities". A report will be brought to the Research Committee at a future meeting.

RS/05-06/32: the Criteria and Approval Process for Trinity Research Institutes has been approved by Council and Board.

RS/05-06/35: The Trinity College Human Research Ethics Approval System and College Wide Human Research Ethics Committee has met and a document is in development.

Action: the Dean of Research will seek input on Service Contracts and Contract Research Activities. A report will be brought to the Research Committee at a future meeting.

SECTION A: Policy/Implementation

RS/05-06/45 ARAM

The memorandum from the Bursar and the ARAM outcomes explanatory booklet have already been presented to the Heads of School Committee. The Dean of Research reviewed research proxy measures after one year and reported to the Research Committee on the four main issues which have arisen.

- (i) An ideal research system would measure by output rather than input but it would be enormously expensive and time-consuming if it were to be conducted properly. The University of Helsinki measures output rather than input, and J. Ohlmeyer has participated in the process as a reviewer. However, very few other universities do this because of the resource and time implications.

The alternative is to measure input, although we do not have the resources to fund international peer-review. However, sponsors of research do have the resources, and it may be possible to build on and utilise their existing peer-review systems with a weighting to take into account the size of research grants in a particular discipline area.

It was pointed out that certain sponsors will have calls open only in certain task areas which preclude those whose research is not in this area from applying. An example was given of the recent IRCHSS call. However, it was noted that as part of Framework Programme 7, the proposed European Research Council will be launched and will be open to all discipline areas including Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

- (ii) Validating the proxy measures involves measuring research activity and quality. It was suggested that the two scattergrams showing the interrelationships of PhD completions and publications, and research income and publications should be run again without the outliers. However, it was agreed that some work could be carried out on the reason for the outliers, and the results circulated to the Research Committee. Currently, where a publication has two College authors, it counts as two. Also, the number of publications measure activity but do not indicate either quality or influence.
- (iii) ARAM does not discriminate against non-science disciplines. For example, the School of History and Humanities when weighted by four under ARAM research proxy measures compares very favourably with the best science schools.
- (iv) Issues: The Research Committee agreed that all figures should be taken from the Green Book; and the IRCHSS studentships should be

recognised as peer-reviewed research income and accredited as such in the ARAM.

It was noted that no one is completely happy with the research proxy measures. However, although no alternative is available at the moment, they should be tested against strand-level benchmarking over the next few months. The benchmarking team will be asked to comment on the outcome of the proxy measures in relation to quality reviews to see how well they match. Benchmarking of five areas will be completed next year and the situation can be reviewed to see how proxies work and how to add in a third proxy measure.

It was also noted that the Green Book does not include income for research obtained via Trinity Foundation.

Action: J Edmond will revisit the question of outliers in the two scattergrams and will circulate the results to the Research Committee.

Action: Benchmarking teams will be asked to comment on the outcome of the proxy measures and Jennifer Edmond will relay the comments at a future meeting of the Research Committee.

RS/05-06/46 Establishment of Joint Trinity College / St James's Hospital Imaging Centre

Last year, the Health Research Board ran a competition for a joint Hospital/University imaging centre for clinical research, and a consortium of St James's Hospital and Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience won the competition. The Research Committee was asked to approve the establishment of a governance structure for the proposed Imaging Centre subject to procedures acceptable to College and St James's Hospital being worked out in relation to which institution will own the assets. These draft procedures will be brought to the Research Committee for approval at a later date. The Imaging Centre will not be a separate legal entity but rather a partnership between two legal entities. The Committee approved the proposal and noted that it must make reference to the paper "Policy on Research Groupings within Trinity College Dublin December 2005".

SECTION B: Implementation Decisions

RS/05-06/47 Internal Funding Schemes 2006

It is anticipated that the total income from IONA for 2005/06 will be approximately €235k. The Research Support System will be maintained until 30 September 2006 at a cost of €31.5k to the Research Committee (with ISS and the Library also making contributions) i.e. €9.5k already agreed plus an additional €22k available due to the later than anticipated start of the Director of Entrepreneurship, whose salary will come from the Research Committee for a period of three years.

The balance of the budget will be spent on Research Committee funding schemes 2005/06. The Committee agreed to provide funding for the Start-up Grant for New Lecturers' Scheme and the Research Capacity Building Scheme.

RS/05-06/48 Criteria for Research Activity

Existing College guidelines cover most of the research activities of the academic staff but some aspects could have a negative impact in relation to certain publications, peer review, book reviews and international journals.

The Research Committee changed the wording to read "research active is *normally* defined as...". The current research active status for a book was amended from three to five years. Locally-published journals with international reach may now be included.

In specific cases where individuals are considered research inactive, Directors of Research may appeal by explaining the case in a memo to the Dean of Research.

RS/05-06/49 National Research Plan 2006-2013

The HEA PRTLTI call for funding is not expected until September 2006 at the earliest.

RS/05-06/50 Co-opting Associate Dean of Research

The Research Committee agreed that the Associate Dean of Research should be co-opted to the Research Committee.

RS/05-06/51 EU Framework Programme 7

The Research Committee approved the setting up of an EU Framework Programme 7 Working Group to include some members and non-members of the Research Committee.

Action: D Alexander will set up an EU Framework Programme 7 Working Group.

Signed:

Date: