

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 20th October 2011

- Present:
- Professor Vinny Cahill (*Dean of Research, DOR, and Chair*)
 - Dr James Callaghan (*Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation, ADTRI, and Secretary*)
 - Professor Veronica Campbell (*Dean of Graduate Studies*)
 - Professor Kevin Rockett (*Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music*)
 - Assistant Professor Aidan Seery (*Director of Research, School of Education*)
 - Associate Professor Eve Patten (*Director of Research, School of English*)
 - Assistant Professor Clemens Ruthner (*Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies*)
 - Professor Ailbhe Ni Chasaide (*Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences*)
 - Assistant Professor Andrew Finlay (*Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy*)
 - Associate Professor Suzanne Cahill (*Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy*)
 - Assistant Professor Iain Atack deputising for Norbert Hintersteiner (*Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics*)
 - Assistant Professor Ed Lavelle (*Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology*)
 - Professor Georg Duesberg (*Director of Research, School of Chemistry*)
 - Associate Professor Carl Vogel (*Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics*)
 - Assistant Professor Conor Houghton (*Director of Research, School of Mathematics*)
 - Assistant Professor Andrew Jackson (*Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences*)
 - Professor Martin Hegner (*Director of Research, School of Physics*)
 - Professor Derek Sullivan (*Director of Research, School of Dental Science*)
 - Professor Padraic Fallon (*Director of Research, School of Medicine*)
 - Professor Catherine Comiskey (*Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery*)
 - Assistant Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll deputising for Associate Professor Carsten Ehrhardt (*Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences*)
 - Prof. Shane O'Mara (*Director of Research, TCIN*)
 - Professor Louis Brennan (*Director of Research, IIS*)
 - Dr Erika Doyle (*Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association*)
- In attendance:
- Ms Doris Alexander (*Research Development Officer*)
 - Ms Deirdre Savage (*Nominee of Treasurer*)
 - Dr Oonagh Kinsman (*Research Development Office & Acting Minute Secretary to the Committee*)

Ms Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary) for RS/11-12/04
Ms Sheila Dunphy, Information Systems and Services for RS/11-12/09
Ms Mary Maxwell, Workstream Coordinator, TR&I for RS/11-12/09

Apologies: Professor John Horne (*Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities*)
Assistant Professor Caoimhin MacMaolain (*Director of Research, School of Law*)
Professor Malcolm MacLachlan (*Director of Research, School of Psychology*)
Professor John Boland (*Director of Research, CRANN*)
Professor Poul Holm (*Director of Research, Trinity Long Room Hub*)

Absent: Professor Frank Barry (*Director of Research, School of Business*)
Professor Seamus Martin (*Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology*)
Dearbhail Lawless (*President of the Graduate Students' Union*)

Section A

RS/11-12/01 Introduction

The Dean of Research introduced himself and the members of the committee. He emphasised that the Research Committee should play a stronger role in research strategy and policy formation and has an important role in communication through the School/TRI Directors of Research to the research community.

RS/11-12/02 Minutes of 31 May 2011

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed subject to the following amendments:

Item RS/10-11/57: Should the Committee wish the Research Projections to be prepared by School, it could be done, but would require input by Schools across the board, with each School applying similar assumptions in calculating their projections. Currently, the Projections are prepared centrally on an Institutional basis.

Item RS/10-11/58: The title should read 'Broadening of Participation in Research Funding in FP7'.

RS/11-12/03 Matters Arising from the Minutes

In relation to item RS/10-11/46, broadening of participation in research funding, this policy was brought by the Dean of Research to the Finance Committee and was approved by the Finance Committee on the 14 June 2011 and by Board on 29 June 2011 with the understanding that the proposal would be cost neutral to College.

Item RS/10-11/49: One of the committee noted that it was still unclear in College who was responsible for obtaining Garda Clearance for staff including those working on research grants where such clearance was required and where the sponsor didn't obtain it.

Action: The DOR to seek further clarification re Garda Clearance.

Item RS/10-11/56 - The Academic Secretary (present for RS/11-12/04), clarified the role of the Research Committee in terms of its relationship with Council. The Research Committee is an academic committee of Council. As such, Council receives recommendations on appropriate matters from the Committee. Similarly, Council may ask Research Committee to develop policy or to follow through on items raised at Council.

Item RS/10-11/58: The Policy to Broaden Participation in Research Funding in FP7 was approved by Council on 15 June 2011 (cf. CL/10-11/194) and noted by Board on 29 June 2011 (cf. BD/10-11/276).

RS/11-12/04 Institutional Review (ISAR)

The Academic Secretary presented the Research Section of the Institutional Self Assessment Review which was provided to the Committee. Under national legislation the College is obliged to undergo an institutional review every 5 years. The last such review was carried out by the EUA in 2004. The current review is being carried out by the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) which aims to review each institution using specified criteria and review procedures. The main emphasis is assessing our procedures for quality assurance and quality enhancement. The document will be finalized in December. The IUQB panel will review documents in the New Year and conduct interviews with staff, students and stakeholders in March 2012. Nominations for the international panel were suggested by the IUA but selection of panel members was made by the HEA. The six members include one retired former President of an Irish University. Input on the document relating to research is sought from the Research Committee. The committee noted that the effect of the financial situation on research quality should be included although the impact measurements will only show these effects over a number of years. There is a lag between investment and ranking so the current financial situation may not affect our research ranking straight away. Attempts should be made to argue the distinctiveness of the research activity within the Irish context. The DOR commented that we need to have a balance between noting the challenges while emphasizing our distinctiveness. As noted by a member of the committee there is currently a review of the Long Room Hub underway and the output from that review could inform an update of the document circulated by the Dean of Research for input into the Review. The Dean of Research indicated that the document circulated is an early draft and invited input from members of the Research Committee.

Action: Committee members to send feedback to DOR by 28th October.

RS/11-12/05 Update on College Research Strategy Thematic Research Areas

The DOR revisited the implementation section of the Knowledge Generation and Transfer Section of the College's strategic plan. To create a focus on the development of a community of scholars and to foster multi-disciplinary research, 17 thematic research areas had been proposed with agreed champions for each. It is proposed to launch 5 this semester (Cancer: Prof John O'Leary; Digital Humanities: Dr Susan Schreibman; International Development: Prof Louis Brennan; Smart and Sustainable Cities: Dr Siobhan Clarke; eHealth and Ageing; Prof Rose-Anne Kenny). The goals of these thematic areas include better communication of strengths to an external audience, improved communication and collaboration between PIs internally and the possibility of interdisciplinary consortia for future external funding. Town Hall type meetings and strategy development could be undertaken. Other themes would be rolled out later. The role of the Theme Champion should be to promote engagement, lead the community building exercise, scope out the description of the area, refining the theme if necessary, and to liaise with the DOR. The Research Development Office would continue to advise individual PIs on funding opportunities and also in liaison with the champions, the RDO would be in a better position to advise on future funding for interdisciplinary activity. The thematic research areas would not be seen as a filter for engagement with industry although the champions could be asked to identify PIs for possible industry visits.

National Research Strategy

The DOR summarized the national effort in this area noting the trend in government agencies to increasingly relate research investment to economic competitiveness. Three major pieces of work include national research prioritization, development of strategy on future of research centres and the new national framework for management of Intellectual Property (IP)

The final draft of the National Research Prioritization Group final report is with the national steering committee and will be presented to the Minister within weeks. The 14 priority areas are in the public domain. The impact on research agencies and their remits is not yet known. It was noted by the committee that there might be impact on the social sciences and humanities as the prioritization concentrated on SET topics despite the fact that Ireland had a natural advantage in certain other areas.

In terms of research centres (CSETs and SRCs), Forfás has mapped out one vision of the future of these centres and looked at their sustainability. There is pressure to have large centres of scale with centres likely to span the spectrum of research from fundamental research, applied research and possibly even contract research. This focus would affect the number of CSETs funded in the future. At present SFI fund 9 CSETs and about 18 strategic Research Clusters. There may be a merging of CSETs.

The national framework for the management of IP is expected to report in early 2012 with the aim of making the use of IP generated by state funding more accessible.

The DOR summarized the new SFI investigator programme which supersedes the Research Frontiers Programme and the Principal Investigators Programme and outlined the available details on the

Research Professor Programme which is likely to fund only a small number of Professorships in the country in the next year.

Action: DOR to send recent documentation on National Research Prioritization to the Committee

Action: Committee members to send comments on the scope of the new SFI investigator programme to DOR.

RS/11-12/06 Research Funding Diversification

The DOR emphasized College's strategy to seek funding from non exchequer sources especially the current FP7 and Horizon 2020 (FP8) in the future. He sees opportunities to promote College research activity in Brussels, to input into policy development and to influence work programme content. Doris Alexander briefed the meeting on recent information received on Horizon 2020 including the development of the programme and rules for participation. The programme content includes Excellent Science Base (ERC, Marie Curie and Future and Emerging Technologies), Industrial Leadership and Competitive Framework (industrial and enabling technologies) and Tackling Societal Challenges. Although social sciences and humanities have scope within the latter topic it was noted by a committee member that there appeared to be significant loss of opportunity especially in the area of social sciences as there is no separate Social Sciences and Humanities programme as there is in FP7.

The DOR also indicated that he would like to see efforts to attract a greater proportion of funding from industry. He added that the development of a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system in College would support this.

Action: Directors of Research to discuss within their Schools their strategy for seeking FP7 funding.

Action: DOR to progress the institutional research profile with the European Commission and to feedback any existing concerns.

Action: Directors of Research to make contact with the existing programme National Delegates if there is concern on the Horizon 2020 topic development (for example in the area of social sciences).

RS/11-12/07 IP Policy and Campus Company Formation.

The ADTRI requested an extension of the derogation of the section of College IP policy that related to campus company formation and this was approved by the Committee. The change in policy has been accompanied by an increase in campus company formation.

RS/11-12/08 Subgroup of the Committee to look at methods to free up time in RDO

This item was postponed to the next meeting due to pressure of time. However the DOR emphasized that the ability of RDO to work

efficiently was not helped by PIs not respecting internal deadlines for funding calls which were available on the RDO web site and communicated via the Research Focus.

Action: Directors of Research to reinforce within their Schools, the need to meet internal deadlines for funding calls.

RS/11-12/09 RPAMS/SERF Update and Demo

Progress with RPAMS (Research Proposal and Award Management System) and its pilot SERF (Supporting External Research Funding) was reported. A member of the committee expressed concerns that such systems were often cumbersome in practice citing the example of the PAC system for post graduate recruitment. The development of RPAMS will be taking feedback from PIs from the pilot and from the phased roll out and concerns will be addressed where possible. Streamlining of processes and central storage of documentation will provide benefit to PIs as well as TR&I and reports available of summary information should allow Schools to review funding plans and strategy more efficiently.

RS/11-12/10 Any Other Business

IS Services has sought representation on the Committee from their Research Computing Unit and this was agreed.

Action: ADTRI to ascertain name of ISS representative on Research Committee and to invite them to attend future meetings.

Section B

RS/11-12/11 Research Ethics Policy

Minutes of meeting on 16 June 2011 noted.

The DOR pointed out that, following the Research Ethics Policy Group (REPG) meeting on 16th June 2011, the Dean of Research had contacted all Schools, Centres and Institutes to request information on existing ethics committees and ethical approval processes. To date, only four responses have been received. This lack of input is delaying the work of the REPG. The DOR requested that Directors of Research follow up with their respective point of contact to solicit a response to the REPG request for information.

Action: Directors of Research to encourage a response to the REPG request for information on ethics committees and ethical approval processes.

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RS/11-12/12 Research Policy - Supporting Broader Participation

Finance Committee minute noted.

RS/11-12/13 Any Other Business

In closing the meeting, the Dean of Research added that he hoped that future meetings of the Research Committee would last no longer than 90 minutes.

Section C

RS/11-12/14 Items for Discussion at Future Meetings

- (i) Research Committee subgroup meeting to free up time in the Research Office
- (ii) Research metrics / RQM
- (iii) Trinity Research Institutes - formation and oversight
- (iv) Assessment of Research Output in the AHSS Disciplines (action from Council)
- (v) Budget Commitments

Signed:

Date: