

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011

Present: Professor Vinny Cahill (*Dean of Research, DOR, and Chair*)  
Professor Kevin Rockett (*Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music*)  
Assistant Professor Aidan Seery (*Director of Research, School of Education*)  
Professor John Horne (*Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities*)  
Assistant Professor Clemens Ruthner (*Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies*)  
Assistant Professor Caoimhin MacMaolain (*Director of Research, School of Law*)  
Professor Ailbhe Ni Chasaide (*Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences*)  
Professor Malcolm MacLachlan (*Director of Research, School of Psychology*)  
Assistant Professor Gaia Narciso (*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*)  
Associate Professor Anthony Quinn (*Director of Research, School of Engineering*)  
Professor Seamus Martin (*Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology*)  
Associate Professor Sinead Ryan (*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*)  
Associate Professor Carsten Ehrhardt (*Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences*)  
Professor John Boland (*Director of Research, CRANN*)  
Prof. Shane O'Mara (*Director of Research, TCIN*)  
Mary O'Connor (*President of the Graduate Students' Union*)  
Dr Erika Doyle (*Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association*)

Dr James Callaghan (*Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation, ADTRI, and Secretary*)

In attendance: Ms Doris Alexander (*Research Development Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation*)

Dr Geoffrey Bradley (*CSG Manager, ISS*)

Dr Camilla Kelly (*Research Projects Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation and Minute Secretary to the Committee*)

Apologies: Professor Frank Barry (*Director of Research, School of Business*)  
Associate Professor Eve Patten (*Director of Research, School of English*)  
Professor Louis Brennan (*Director of Research, IIS*)  
Professor Poul Holm (*Director of Research, Trinity Long Room Hub*)  
Professor Veronica Campbell (*Dean of Graduate Studies*)  
Ms Deirdre Savage (*Research Accounting Manager, Treasurer's Office*)

### Section A

#### RS/11-12/15 Introduction

The Chair welcomed new members to the Committee: Assistant Professor Gaia Narciso (*Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy*); Associate Professor Sinead Ryan (*Director of Research, School of Mathematics*); and Dr Geoffrey Bradley (*CSG Manager, ISS*).

#### RS/11-12/16 Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011

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

Item RS/11-12/02: Deirdre Savage, Research Accounting Manager, Treasurer's Office requested that the wording "RS/10-11/57 - The Treasurer's nominee requested that the action be removed from the minutes. It was not possible to provide the projections of research funding by School taking into account the assumptions used in the calculations and lack of detail currently held by the Treasurer's Office on Schools' projections."

be replaced with

"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."

This was agreed by members.

**RS/11-12/17 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Item RS/11-12/02 (referring to item RS/10-11/57): It was agreed that these School-based research projections would not be carried out.

Item RS/11-12/03 (referring to item RS/10-11/49): The Chair revisited the subject of Garda Clearance. The main problem that staff encounter when trying to obtain Garda Clearance is the time delay. TCD is authorized to request Garda Clearance for both staff and students. Gillian Maxwell is the HR person who deals with Garda Clearances. Since 15th June of this year, HR has processed 15 applications from staff. HR expects to process these applications within a working day to have them sent to the Central Vetting Unit of An Garda Siochana. The processing time within An Gardai can alter between 15-50 days. It is expected that the vetting process will be put on a statutory basis with the legislation being currently worked on; when this is enacted it may lead to a more timely process through the allocation of resources within An Gardai.

Item RS/11-12/04: Institutional Review. No further feedback has been received from Committee members.

Item RS/11-12/05: College Research Strategy. This item is on the agenda for this meeting.

Item RS/11-12/06: Research Funding Diversification. This item is on the agenda for this meeting.

Item RS/11-12/07: IP Policy and Campus Company Formation. The Chair informed the Committee that the policy was approved by the Finance Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011, subject to one minor change - that signoff should also be sought from the Dean of Research.

Item RS/11-12/10: ISS is now represented on the Committee by Dr Geoffrey Bradley.

Item RS/11-12/11: Research Ethics Policy. This item is on the agenda for this meeting. To date, only five schools have provided information on ethics committees and ethics approvals processes.

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

**RS/11-12/18 Update on Research Strategy Implementation (DoR)**

The Chair informed the Committee that 18 Thematic Areas are now being rolled out in phases, with the first five having been launched. It is expected that the first set of town-hall meetings will commence before Christmas. A video will be produced for the College web site to illustrate College achievements in each of the Thematic Areas. It

was agreed that roll out of the remainder of the themes would follow on a phased basis later in the year.

The issue of key performance indicators (KPIs) for the themes was once again raised. KPIs for these types of activities will be hard to identify. The Chair welcomed suggestions for KPIs and also asked for ideas for creating and promoting the thematic areas. One suggestion from the floor was that the theme champions could identify their own metrics in the first instance.

One of Committee noted that it was important that each area show outputs and asked whether the themes are linked to areas where we are garnering citations? The Committee agreed that it was important that we are proactive in promoting areas where we have strengths.

#### **RS/11-12/19 Research Funding Diversification (discussion led by DoR)**

The Committee noted 2 documents, circulated in advance of the meeting. The first document provided some outline details of Horizon 2020, the European Commission's upcoming (2014) framework programme for research and innovation. The second document was a draft document from Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation, proposing some strategies that might be put in place to support College's efforts to diversify its research funding base.

The Chair started the discussion by informing the Committee that College currently has a large dependency on Irish exchequer sources (ca. 77%). Given the current economic climate, the availability of these funds is in decline, and College needs to seriously examine alternative sources of funding.

Referring to the Horizon 2020 document circulated to the members, the Chair described how Horizon 2020 is expected to provide some 80 billion euro in funding over the lifetime of the programme (2014-2020). The programme will cover all disciplines and is likely to become the principal source of funding for College. The programme does not commence until 2014, giving College some time to develop a mature strategy. There is also time for College to influence funding mechanisms and indirect cost rates etc. as these are still not finally decided by the Commission.

The Chair then invited Ms Alexander to speak to the second document.

Ms Alexander started by reminding the Committee that the document is in draft format, and is intended to stimulate discussion and other/further suggestions from the Committee.

It was put to the Committee that it was important that the Faculties/Schools/Thematic Areas should have their own Strategic Plans for research in place in order to guide the strategies that the Research office might put in place in support of these plans.

In the absence of any plans, the document puts forward some suggestions for supports. It also discusses the structure of these supports i.e. centralized versus decentralized structures. Some of the suggestions include mentoring for inexperienced staff and providing buy-out of time for researchers to put large-scale grant applications together.

The floor was invited to comment on the document. Some of the Committee pointed out that a major issue for Schools in developing & maintaining a research portfolio was retention of world-class staff. It was agreed that the document was very thought provoking; however, the problem of staff retention should be a priority. The Chair responded by noting that he hoped a strategic staffing & staff retention program would be put in place in the near future.

The suggestion of a “US Funding Desk” was received favourably. The DoR commented that internationalization beyond Europe is a good idea.

One of the Committee noted that the quality of researchers was very important and that College needs to encourage its best people to apply for funds. One idea might be to free up time to allow them to apply for grants. The Chair noted that Schools themselves would need to identify such people.

Other suggestions included providing supports for writing the administrative side of grant applications - on some proposals up to 60% of the application is not about the science. It was suggested that as part of this it would be useful to have workshops to ensure that such ‘dispersed’ knowledge is aggregated and shared. Similarly, having an ‘FP7 desk’/dedicated support would keep related knowledge together.

It was also suggested that being able to view previous FP7 applications would be useful. However, it was noted that some people tend to be very ‘sensitive’ in relation to the content of their applications.

It was suggested that providing local research support officers to support the development of research proposals would be useful. It was noted that such research officers already exist in some Schools/TRIs and could significantly lessen the overhead of proposal preparation for researchers and could potentially be provided on a self-financing basis.

The Chair concluded the discussion by thanking the Committee for their contributions.

*Action: Chair to provide a second draft of the Research Funding Diversification document*

**RS/11-12/20 Trinity Research Institutes (Working Group)**

The Committee noted and approved the Terms of Reference from the Chair, circulated in advance of the meeting.

*Action: The Committee to nominate members for the Working Group.*

**RS/11-12/21 Associated Staff - Participation in Research (Working Group)**

The Committee noted and approved the Terms of Reference from the Chair, circulated in advance of the meeting subject to suggestions from the Director of Human of Human resources notified to the DoR by email. . One of the Committee noted that the Working Group should ensure that it liaises with the Senior Promotions Committee, given its role in approving adjunct/visiting appointments.

*Action: The DoR to revise the terms of reference as above.*

*Action: The Committee to nominate members for the Working Group.*

**RS/11-12/22 Ethics (Working Group)**

The Chair informed the meeting that there was a need to reconstitute the Ethics committee and he will call on existing members to see if they wish to serve. He added that he was also seeking volunteers to sit on the Working Group.

*Action: The DoR to contact the existing members of the REWG.*

**RS/11-12/23 Research Metrics for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (Working Group)**

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference from the Chair, circulated in advance of the meeting. The Committee commented that it would be difficult to establish a single set of metrics on a Faculty basis; different Schools need different metrics. Several Directors of Research from AHSS commented that the Faculty has already established a set of metrics, which were over a year in development, and that there was therefore no need to establish a further working group. This was agreed by the committee.

**RS/11-12/24 Any Other Urgent Business**

The Chair informed the Committee that plans have recently been announced to merge IRCHSS and IRCSET into one body, to create a new Irish Research Council under the aegis of the Higher Education Authority.

The Committee approved a request from the Board of TCIN for its minutes to be sent to Research Committee for noting.

Doris Alexander (Research Development Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation), invited the Committee to attend an upcoming workshop on Horizon 2020 that is taking place on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

**Section B - no items under this section**

**Section C**

**RS/11-12/25 Items for Discussion at Future Meetings**

- (i) Research Committee subgroup meeting to free up time in RDO
- (ii) RQM
- (iii) Budget Commitments

Signed: .....

Date: .....

DRAFT