

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 21st January 2014

- Present: Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research (DoR) and Chair
Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation (TR&I) and Secretary
Professor Derek Sullivan, Associate Dean of Research (ADoR)
Professor Paul Coughlan, Director of Research, School of Business
Assistant Professor Stephen Minton in place of Professor Colette Murphy, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Aileen Douglas, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor Gaia Narciso, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Robert Gilligan, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Daniela Zisterer, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Georg S. Duesberg, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Professor Carl Vogel, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics
Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Gabrielle McKee, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of Research, CRANN
Professor Juergen Barkhoff, Director of Research, Trinity Long Room Hub
Ryan Kenny, President, Graduate Students Union
- In attendance: Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation
Mr David O'Shea, Acting Research Acc. Manager, Financial Services Division
Mr John Murphy, Director of Information Systems Services
Mr Tony McMahon, Director of Human Resources, for Item RS/13-14/41
Mr Ciaran McEvoy, Research Projects Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation and Minute Secretary to the Committee
- Apologies: Professor David Tombs, Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Professor Andrew Jackson, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Frank Boland, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Yuri Volkov, Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor Shane O'Mara, Director of Research, TCIN
Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies

Not present: Professor Martin Adams, Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music
Professor John Horne, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities
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 Science
Professor Malcolm MacLachlan, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Seamus Martin, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Mike Peardon, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Louis Brennan, Director of Research, IIS
Professor Luke O'Neill, Director of Research, Trinity Biosciences Institute (TBSI)
Dermot Frost, Acting Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association (TRSA)

RS/13-14/35 Introduction

The Dean of Research welcomed everyone to the first meeting of this calendar year.

RS/13-14/36 Minutes of 3rd December 2013

The minutes of the meeting were approved by the Committee subject to the following changes:

RS/13-14/27: Matters Arising from the Minutes. Paragraph one - replication of the word "Item".

RS/13-14/37 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item RS/13-14/27 (referring to Item RS/13-14/17): SFI's Career Development Award (CDA) and Starting Investigator Research Grant (SIRG) schemes. The DoR will communicate the Committee's concerns regarding the CDA and SIRG schemes to SFI. The DoR is Chair of the IUA VP/Deans of Research Standing Group this year and will raise the issue with Prof Mark Ferguson, who will be attending the next meeting of this group.

Item RS/13-14/22: College Research Web Site. There has been lots of input from a wide range of people, and a substantial set of modifications have taken place. It is hoped that the research pages will be live before the end of the week ending Friday 24th January 2014.

Item RS/13-14/29: Policy Update: Broadening Participation in EU Framework (FP) Programmes. The policy was accepted by Council. Doris Alexander indicated that HR had advised that the term 'core TCD-funded permanent' be changed to 'TCD-funded permanent' and 'fixed purpose contract' changed to 'specified purpose contract', Otherwise the policy is as approved and will be published on the relevant website shortly.

RS/13-14/32: Research Support System (RSS). The DoR reiterated his encouragement to all research staff to update their RSS profiles, which will facilitate collection of research outputs and enhance the profile of individual researchers. The DoR also noted that the new RSS website is now live. Some technical hitches are to be expected, but this should not deter researchers from updating their profiles. The DoR also noted that there was now a new format in use for displaying personal profiles on the Research Web Site.

RS/13-14/38 DoR Update

The DoR noted that Trinity's Industry Strategy was approved by Board on the 11th December 2013. The Strategy identifies a reorganisation of Trinity Research & Innovation with the creation of the Office of Corporate Partnership and Knowledge Exchange. One of the major objectives of the Industry Strategy is to enhance Trinity's visibility to industry with the goal of increasing the amount of research funding derived from industrial sources. The policy also proposes to facilitate enterprise engagement with the College through the provision of an industry facing office. Through the policy, it is envisaged that the amount of industry funding coming to Trinity will increase and become commensurate with Trinity's peers.

The principles underlying the new College IP policy were approved by Council, with one change relating to the policy surrounding IP created by College staff. This is a relatively minor change to recognise the existing policy that College does not claim copyright in works of scholarship, explicitly in the principles document..

RS/13-14/39 College Strategic Plan 2014 - 2019

The DoR gave a brief outline of the draft process for the development of the College Strategic Plan 2014-2019.

One of the pillars of the College Strategic Plan is research and innovation. The proposed grouping to drive this pillar includes six representatives from across the faculties, the academic secretary, one postdoctoral fellow, one student and two external advisors. The group would be chaired by the DoR and the Director of TR&I would be secretary to the group. In order to objectively identify areas of research strength, which might be prioritized in the plan, the DoR proposed that a review of College's research activities be undertaken. The mechanism through which this would be achieved has to be finalized, but the DoR proposed that an external group of experts perform a review based on a process developed by a small working group of eminent Trinity researchers. It was agreed that a suitable starting point for any such review would be the already identified Trinity Research themes.

Several points arising were discussed, including the suitability of assigning the review process development to senior Trinity staff only. To relieve any fears about the objectivity of this approach, consideration was given to the working group being comprised of members of all experience levels within College. However, the DoR allayed these fears by indicating that the working group would only be

tasked with developing the processes to which the external evaluators would work.

Questions were also raised regarding the assessment of strengths. The DoR stated that area-specific metrics would need to be used along with an element of international benchmarking to determine strengths. The DoR indicated that no targets exist regarding the number of priority areas to be identified, and that College should not fear changing existing research themes, should the process so dictate.

It was accepted by the Committee that the timeframe available to the external reviewers to conclude their review was ambitious and would have to be handled very carefully and delicately.

There was general agreement that the formation of a working group to develop the process through which external reviewers would identify areas of strength and growth within Trinity was accepted. The DoR informed the Committee that the proposal would now be considered by Executive Officers.

The concept of a College wide research focus was discussed, and the fact that most such endeavors include the words “global” and “sustainability” was suggested. Whether College should follow the international norm was discussed, with the consensus that this would not be the most beneficial route for Trinity. Concepts suggested included “Wellbeing”, “Urbanization”, “Ageing”, and “Data”. The Data focus could include data related to all disciplines and specifically “Digital Data”.

The Committee consensus was that this point requires more thought and discussion so as to avoid developing too narrow a focus within Trinity. It was also noted that should Trinity decide to develop such a research focus it should be unique to Trinity and reflect a critical problem of societal concern. Such a research focus should also feed into the current College re-branding exercise, as not to do so may be a missed opportunity.

RS/13-14/40 Research Ethics Policy Committee Update

The Associate Dean for Research presented the final draft of a document describing the Criteria for Research Ethics Committees, which had been amended to take into account recommendations from the wider College community following widespread consultation. The draft document was formally approved by the Research Committee.

The Associate Dean updated the Committee on the current activities of the Research Ethics Policy Committee, which is currently in the process of reviewing the existing Research Ethics Committees in College with a view to formally recognising and approving their activities.

A proposal was also accepted for a subcommittee of the REPC to be formed to review and update the Good Research Practice Policy. The Associate Dean noted that this policy states that Schools that use primary data are required to have policies in place for the retention of these data and that these policies should be visible on each School’s website. Training in the area of data protection will be provided as

required. Schools will be expected to have their ethics and data retention policies clearly stated on their websites by the end of the academic year.

RS/13-14/41 Report from the Working Group on Associated Staff

The Committee noted a policy document, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr Tony McMahon gave a brief presentation to the Committee.

Mr McMahon started by outlining the College policy in terms of the title Professor Emeritus. Trinity College proposes to formalize the awarding of the title Professor Emeritus.

Mr McMahon noted that the College currently engages with staff not primarily employed in College through the use of Adjunct appointments and titles. The process of formal recognition of Associated Staff must be consistent with the correct award of title to an individual based on (i) their existing academic title; and (ii) those without existing titles, e.g. industrial leaders, etc.

Mr McMahon also noted that there are compliance issues relating to salaries for Adjunct staff, particularly in terms of those already in receipt of a public salary or pension.

Mr McMahon noted the policy on Associated Staff was to remove obstacles to engaging with Trinity, which could greatly increase potential industrial engagement.

One attendee noted that the terminology in the policy document was contradictory to accepted College terminology and sponsor normal practice in terms of the definition of a Principle Investigator (PI). There was some confusion surrounding the use of the term PI, which may need to be addressed.

One member raised the question of the international practice of automatically awarding retired staff the title Professor Emeritus.

RS/13-14/42 TR&I Update: Horizon 2020 Strategy

Dr Diarmuid O'Brien noted that Horizon 2020 was now open, with the first deadlines closing in April 2014. He presented the supports available through TR&I and stressed the need to engage early with TR&I to receive the most comprehensive support available.

The DoR subsequently encouraged members to encourage their constituency to apply to relevant Horizon 2020 calls, and to use the network of successful FP7 awardees for information purposes. The DoR also suggested Trinity researchers should be encouraged to make best use of their existing international collaborations to form consortia for Horizon 2020 applications.

The DoR also stressed Trinity's policy to encourage suitable applicants towards the European Research Council (ERC) grants, and stressed the benefits of starting the application process early. The DoR also noted that Trinity researchers should consider approaching their international collaborators to determine whether they would consider hosting their ERC grants in Trinity. One Member suggested this would

not be practical given Trinity does not have a policy regarding the granting of positions to ERC applicants.

One member raised the issue of the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions providing good PhD stipends but low running costs, as most of the available running costs go towards PhD fees. This leaves little funding for consumables and other items. The member enquired as to whether Trinity would be willing to investigate fees remissions or waivers in such instances. The DoR noted that a Research Committee funded PhD scheme was due to end this year, and there was a possibility of re-directing funds towards paying Marie Sklodowska-Curie PhD fees. However, no decision has been made relating to this fees issue and it required further discussion.

One member noted Horizon 2020 was very multi-disciplinary in nature and that the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS) could now engage in consortia towards most Horizon 2020 calls. The member broached the subject of AHSS organizing a Brokerage Event to inform the rest of the Trinity research community of the expertise available within the Faculty and how best to leverage such expertise in Horizon 2020 consortia. The DoR recognized such an event as beneficial to Trinity's engagement with Horizon 2020 and supported the suggestion.

RS/13-14/43 Any Other Business

The Associate Dean reminded the Committee that the deadline for the submission of items for the HEA Large Equipment Items survey (items of value > €100,000) had passed and that any additional items for inclusion should be forwarded to him as soon as possible.