**The University of Dublin
Trinity University**

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 26 May 2015

Present:

Professor Vinny Cahill, Dean of Research (DoR) and Chair
Professor Donal O'Mahony on behalf of Professor Carl Vogel, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Padraic Fallon on behalf of Professor James O'Donnell, Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor Paul Coughlan, Director of Research, School of Business
Professor Martina Hennessy, Associate Dean of Research (ADoR)
Professor Balazs Apor, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
Professor Andrew Pierce, Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics
Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Aoife McLysaght, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Mike Peardon, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Jane Stout, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
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 Carol Newman, Director of IIIS
Professor Orla Hardiman, Director Designate of TBSI
Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of CRANN

In attendance:

Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation
Mr David O'Shea, Acting Research Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
Dr Fiona Killard, Trinity Research & Innovations, Rapporteur to the Committee
Professor Balz Kamber, Deputy Director of iCRAG (item RS/14-15/75 only)
Professor Linda Hogan, Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer (item RS/14-15/80 only)

Apologies:

Professor Shane O'Mara, Director of TCIN
Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics
Professor Wolfgang Schmitt, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Professor James O'Donnell, Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor Carl Vogel, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Not present:

Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation (TR&I) and Secretary
Professor Martin Adams, Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music
Professor Andrew Loxley, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Aileen Douglas, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director or Research, School of Law
Professor Lorraine Leeson, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Paul Scanlon, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Daniela Zister, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Juergen Barkhoff, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub
Professor John Walsh, Director or Research, School of Education
Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies
Dr Michael Cooke, Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association (TRSA)
Ms Megan Lee, President, Graduate Students Union
Mr John Murphy, Director of Information Systems Services

RS/14-15/72 Minutes of 28 April 2015

The minutes of last meeting were accepted.

RS/14-15/73 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The DoR reported meeting apologies.

The DoR informed members that a memo on the Clarification of International Policy (RS/14-15/57) went before the May 13 Council meeting. Council has requested further clarification regarding this item and the DoR and the VP/CAO will bring forward a further paper on this issue for consideration by Council.

The DoR reported that the Research Committee item regarding the Impact of Maternity Leave on Research Productive Status (RS/14-15/50) also went to the 13 May sitting of Council. The Quality Metrics recommendations outlined in this document regarding concessions for researchers with major administrative duties, part-time contracts and maternity leave, as well as a recommendation to increase the weighting for multi-authored papers from 0.5 to 1 were approved in full by Council. The DoR informed members that Council has requested Research Committee to consider the definition of research excellence metrics.

RS/14-15/74 Dean of Research Update (DoR)

In the interest of time this item was postponed.

RS/14-15/75 Trinity Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences (TCRAG)

The Deputy Director of the SFI Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences (iCRAG), Prof. Balz Kamber, delivered a presentation to Research Committee members on a proposal for a Trinity Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences (TCRAG). The Deputy Director indicated that the proposed centre would be strongly interdisciplinary in nature and would involve academics from six departments in three schools; the School of Natural Sciences, the School of Engineering and the School of Chemistry. The Deputy Director informed members that TCRAG would be to act as an umbrella spreading the benefits of this national collaboration to earlier career stage researchers and to build a track record to further bolster the E3 initiative. The proposed Centre does not require additional infrastructure or resources at present.

The DoR congratulated Prof. Kamber on iCRAG and informed members that the proposal had the backing of the Head of School of Natural Sciences. The Directors of Research for the School of Engineering and the School of Natural Sciences also supported the application.

Following a discussion regarding the name of the Centre the DoR noted that there may be a new policy on the naming of Research Centres to include the designation 'Trinity' and indicated that the proposed Centre name satisfied this criterion.

Research Committee formally approved the application for the Trinity Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences (TCRAG).

RS/14-15/76   Any Other Urgent Business

The ADoR provided an update to Research Committee members on the activities of the Research Ethics Committee.

Members were informed that the first meeting of the Stem cell working group was held in April under the chairmanship of Prof Orla Sheils, it was preceded by a discussion led by Prof KO Lee on cultural influences relevant to stem cell research. The ADoR reported that this event was well attended and provided context for members of the working group. The ADoR also reported that the terms of reference were proposed and accepted, reference documents were considered and tasks allocated to working group members for completion before the next meeting of the group.

The ADoR also informed members that the first meeting of the Biobanking and data retention working group was held on the 14 April under the chairmanship of Prof Orla Sheils. The University's Internal Auditor, Mr Francis Sheerin, presented to this meeting on the University's experience of data retention processes arising from the TILDA project. The ADoR indicated that as TILDA was one of the University's largest data sources, it provides a good exemplar of many of the difficulties that may be encountered in developing and maintaining clinical and human data and biobanking. Although a data retention policy exists the legal advice is that it should be customised for individual research projects to determine issues such as security awareness training, data security, data usage and availability to third parties. The ADoR reported that terms of reference were proposed and accepted and reference documents were also

considered at this meeting. A second meeting of this group will be held on Thursday 04 June 2015.

The ADoR informed members that the next meeting of the Research Ethics Policy Committee (REPC) will take place on 02 July 2015 and that minutes of both the ethics policy working groups as well as an amended Lone Researcher Policy will be considered for approval. Once approved by REPC they will be referred to the Research Committee in the autumn.

The ADoR further updated members on the Lone Researcher Policy indicating that the approved guidelines would remain in place for the present. The ADoR informed members that the amended policy includes additions from the School of Medicine (additional security advice and off campus working), the School of Pharmacy (after hours guidelines for those in laboratory settings) and the School of Chemistry (buddy-book template) and will be considered at the next REPC committee on 02 July.

The ADoR also provided members with an update on progress on establishing an online ethic submission process and told members that the Manager of the Trinity Centre for High Performance Computing (TCHPC), Mr. Dermot Frost and the TCHPC Systems Administrator, Mr. Paddy Doyle, now have the required documentation from the level 1 and level 2 of ethics committees. The ADoR and Professor Sheils are due to meet with the TCHPC personnel again shortly to begin the process of populating the system. The ADoR indicated that they intended to have this in place during the first semester of 2015-16.

The ADoR also presented a memo to the Research committee regarding the ratification of a level 1 research ethics committee for the School of Natural Sciences. The ADoR indicated that this application and the relevant documentation had been considered and approved by the REPC and a request was brought to Research Committee to formally approve the establishment of this Ethics Committee.

Research Committee formally approved the application for a level 1 research ethics committee for the School of Natural Sciences.

RS/14-15/77 Dean of Research Report

The DoR informed the Committee that the Dean of Research Report 2013-2014 is currently being prepared. Many of the Schools have now provided contributions and these are currently being amalgamated in to the report. The DoR reminded members that the report will be delivered in two discrete volumes; one with contributions from administrative units, Schools and Centres/Institutes and a second volume with metrics from the Office for Scholarly Communication and Access to Research (OSCAR).

The DoR provided some highlights from the reports to members indicating that overall the trends are positive and that the positive trend is set to continue. The DoR informed members that the full report would be circulated in due course.

A query was raised by a member on the intended audience for the report. The DoR indicated that the metrics in the report is principally for internal

information while the highlights from the Schools would be used for external publicity. The DoR also informed members that the publications report which will be produced later also contains useful metrics for the university.

RS/14-15/78 Sustainability of Trinity Research Institutes (TRIs)

The DoR circulated a memo to members pertaining to the sustainability of Trinity Research Institutes (TRIs) arising from a request for a review of the issue by the Finance Committee to the DoR, CFO and VP/CAO. This process is on-going, but will clarify the need for the development of policy to deal with this issue. The DoR mentioned that this issue was previously discussed at the Heads of School forum. It was noted that TRIs depend on support from Schools and this relationship is therefore crucial to the sustainability of TRIs and to providing a flow of income to TRIs from overheads or other sources. The DoR suggested that there needs to be a high level of transparency on the activities of TRIs and that an open dialogue on costs must take place between Schools and TRIs and a clear plan for the funding of TRIs should be agreed. The DoR noted that it is not possible to instigate a one-model-fits-all approach and that a bespoke model is required for each TRI to manage this relationship.

The Director of Research for the School of Genetics and Microbiology enquired as to whether any rules would be imposed on this relationship. The DoR indicated that this would not be the case unless an agreement could not be reached between the relevant School and TRI. The DoR also noted that the distribution of overheads may be the most difficult issue on which to reach agreement and that the DoR can assist negotiations on this issue.

It was also noted that Schools do not have a veto on TRI membership and any potential policy needs to support this position when considering agreement on the division of overheads.

The Director of Research for the School of Business also commented that it may be difficult to assess sustainability in a business plan if an application for strategic funding is to be made annually. He also noted that a three-year business plan could include plans for sustainability; however, this is more difficult to plan over five years and the optimal position would be to plan for three years and provide a potential plan for the final two years.

In relation to the query from the Director of Research from the School of Business the DoR agreed with the points raised and indicated that the details of the requirements for the requested business cases were still not finalised.

The Director of TR&I noted that what Schools want from an Institute can sometimes be at odds with what TRIs want from a School. The Director indicated that there needs to be clarity on what the University wants from its TRIs and that this needs to be clearly defined.

The Director of CRANN noted the added difficulty of running a national research centre through a TRI and of managing diverse stakeholders. He highlighted the need for College support of the TRIs. The DoR noted that most resources were allocated to Schools through the ABC process and

that there was not substantial resource available directly to TRIs other than strategic funding. An important contribution that Schools make is staffing via the payment of PI salary costs.

The Director of the TBSI pointed out that there was no impetus for Schools to support TRIs and, in the case of TBSI, there is a shared building which further complicates the relationship. The Director of TBSI also highlighted the fact that the Ussher application was difficult to manage as Schools did not want to lose a position to a TRI. She further noted that there needs be an incentive for Schools to work with TRIs.

The DoR commented that there must be a synergistic relationship between Schools and Institutes and that they should not be working in competition and that this is also addressed by the policy.

RS/14-15/79 College Overhead Policy

Members were informed that a request had been made by Board to review the College's Overhead Policy. This request was motivated by the perception that the pattern of research income is changing with larger PI or Centre-level grants and more funding potentially flowing through Institutes rather than Schools.

David O'Shea, Acting Research Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division, and his team did a significant amount of work on assessing the pattern of overhead income only a few small, specific changes are proposed to the current policy. It was noted that in terms of overhead distribution two-thirds are channelled to academic areas with one-third going to central services. A portion goes back directly to Schools through the OIP process while some overhead is also allocated through the ABC process.

The DoR informed the Committee that, recognising the fact that there are certain areas in which there is now less research funding available, for example, due to the research prioritisation framework, the Heads of School has requested consideration of the possibility to off-set this shortfall by making funding from overheads available in these areas. In the past overheads have followed activity so this would be a significant departure from current policy. He requested the Committee's view on the matter.

The Director of Research for the School of Genetics and Microbiology Pointed out that the top-slicing of overheads would be the biggest concern for PIs and that it would be necessary for clarity to be provided on how these finances would be spent strategically and for agreement to be reached on the process to be uses. The DoR agreed that there would need to be a high degree of transparency in the process. The DoR also noted that Schools are at liberty to spend overheads as they wish and no guidance is given to Schools on how to utilise this funding. There is no specific College policy on this; however, it would be positive if some of it was used to support un-funded areas of research.

The Director of Research for the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences also raised the issue that the percentage of overheads that comes back to an individual PI may differ between a Centre and a School.

The DoR noted that in some cases Centres have substantial infrastructures that need to be sustained and it is not necessarily the case that this funding goes directly back to the PI. The DoR pointed out that this is not a College-level issue, but rather a local policy issue within the School/Centre.

RS/14-15/80 Teunure-Track System for Entry-Level Academics

The VP/CAO presented a paper that had been circulated to members in advance of Research Committee on a proposed tenure-track system for entry-level academics. The VP/CAO noted that the proposed system is not the same as the US tenure-track process, but rather proposes to introduce a tenure-track system based on the success of the Ussher programme. The VP/CAO indicated that the paper does not make the case for change as this has already been done and is captured in our College Strategic Plan. The VP/CAO noted that the paper had been developed through engagement with other Universities such as Cornell, Columba, Boston College, Oxford, as the College has good relationships with these institutes and hence there was an opportunity to gather details and get a good understating of their processes and any potential difficulties there.

The VP/CAO indicated that the proposal had already been considered by Heads of School Committee, Council, HR Committee, ASA/IFUT, and Junior Academic Progressions Committee and that she was now canvassing for input from Research Committee and would be also be requesting input fromBoard.

The VP/CAO further noted that issues that were already raised by other Committees will be addressed in the next iteration. There will be a mechanism to address the concern that this will limit the recruitment pool. She also noted that related gender issues may arise. She noted, however, that this has been considered in part by Research Committee and will be considered further to ensure that this issue does not arise. The VP/CAO also mentioned that other issues around appeals, mentoring, etc., may arise which will be amalgamated in the next iteration of this paper. The VP/CAO stressed that the approach taken must also be compatible with employment law.

The Director of Research for the School of Genetics and Microbiology queried whether flexibility for females would be part of the process. The VP/CAO highlighted footnote 4 of her paper which addresses this issue. The Director of Research for the School of Genetics and Microbiology also asked if the five-year period proposed could be extended for females. The VP/CAO pointed out that this could also extend the period of uncertainty for this group and so this approach could also have its drawbacks. The VP/CAO noted that a range of options will need to be discussed before a decision made.

Prof. O'Mahony from the School of Computer Science and Statistics queried whether Schools would have more time to consider and reflect on the proposal. The VP/CAO commented that there would be time for Schools to consider the proposal, but at this point input from the Committees was being requested.

The VP/CAO noted that an external applicant would be attracted by the opportunity to come to Trinity on a fixed-term contact with the guarantee of permanency after a four-year period. The VP/CAO also highlighted the fact that there could be a fast-track option to keep those that have succeeded earlier. The VP/CAO also noted that under Irish law the one-year probation period is the only one that holds and that many feel that this is not sufficient time to assess an academic. The one-year approach leaves us with people unsuited to an academic career and may lead to issues of underperformance.

The VP/CAO noted that the accelerated advancement approach was very welcome and would be an attractive proposal for recruitees. This would also provide an opportunity for the University to recruit at a different level and more regularly.

The VP/CAO noted that even during the economic recession approx. 40-50 academics were recruited per year but that these recruitees often had no reassurance of their position. Currently there are many limited contracts so there is a need to prepare for a period of stability.

The ADoR queried whether there would be joint-posts between the University and the hospitals. The VP/CAO confirmed that these would be Trinity-only posts.

The Director of CRANN noted his support for the proposal and queried the process that would be put in place should an academic recruited to one of these positions fail to perform at the necessary level. The VP/CAO confirmed that in this instance a 'tenure-line' is created and the School keeps the post and can recruit to it again. She also noted that HR are considering the contractual implications for these posts as these kind on contracts could be challenging to draft.

ACTION: Member are requested to consider the proposal for a Tenure-Track System for Entry-Level Academics and provide feedback to the VP/CAO.

RS/14-15/81 Research Excellence Criteria

The Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology reminded members that she had previously discussed the refining of quality metrics with the Committee. Following-on from that work she is now involved in reshaping / revising the excellence criteria for the University. The Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology circulated a number of papers to members for their consideration and pointed out that a statement on what our values are and metrics may impact on researcher behaviour. She stressed that metrics should reflect good practice and that there was also a need to clearly define what the metrics would be used for – promotions, allocation of funding etc.

The Committee discussed these issues and agreed on a number of principles to guide the development of new a research evaluation system. These are summarised as follows:

A new research evaluation system should:
- Take differences between disciplines, and different research norms into account

- Account for the career stage of the individual
- Consider a wide set of criteria
- Avoid use of impact factors

The Committee also decided to establish a small working group composed of Research Committee members and other relevant personnel to consider this further and to develop this proposal.

RS/14-15/82 Research Committee Self-Evaluation

The results of the self-evaluation are to be circulated to members.

RS/14-15/83 Any Other Business

The DoR thanked the Research Committee for their support. The Research Committee members thanked the DoR for his leadership during his tenure as Dean.