The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 06 October 2015

Present:

Professor John Boland, Dean of Research (DoR) and Chair
Professor Martina Hennessy, Associate Dean of Research (ADoR)
Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Director of Trinity Research & Innovation and Secretary
Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business
Professor Stephen Minton, Director of Research, School of Education
Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities
Professor Roja Fazaeli, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies
Professor Mark Bell, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor Lorraine Leeson, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences
Professor Carol Newman, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Andrew Pierce, Director of Research, School of Religions Peace Studies and Theology
Professor Daniela Zisterer, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
Professor Isabel Rozas, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Professor Sergey Frolov, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Jane Stout, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences
Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics
Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Orla Hardiman, Director of Research, TBSI
Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of Research, CRANN
Professor Shane O'Mara, Director of Research, TCIN
Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of Research, Trinity Long Room Hub
Michael Cooke, Acting Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association (TRSA)
Ryan Kenny, President, Graduate Students Union

In attendance:

Dr Fiona Killard, Trinity Research & Innovations, Rapporteur to the Committee
Mr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations (IT Services)
Professor David Shephard, Director of the Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies (item RS/15-16/04 only)
Ms Ashling Hayes, TARA Content Manager (item RS/15-16/09 only)
Ms Maura Horan, Trinity Web Officer (item RS/15-16/10 only)

Apologies:

Professor Jane Alden, Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music

Professor Doug Leith, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics

Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering

Professor Aoife McLysaght, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology

Professor Seamus Donnelly, Director of Research, School of Medicine

Professor Geralyn Hynes, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Mr David O'Shea, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division

Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation

Not present:

Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology

Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy

Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies

Actions arising / on-going:

Agenda Item	Owner	Action	Status
RS/15-16/03	**Directors of Research**	Directors of Research to provide information and highlights for the DoR Report on currently research and innovation of interest from their Schools	*In progress*
RS/15-16/04	**Dean of Research**	The Research Committee approved a proposal for the establishment of the Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies. This item will proceed to Council.	*In progress*
RS/15-16/05	**Associate Dean of Research**	Follow-up with the Chair of the newly established Future Earth Ireland (FEI) initiative regarding the 'Our Common Future' Scientific Committee.	*In progress*
RS/15-16/05	**Dean of Research**	The Research Committee formally supported the signing of the 'Our Common Future' Statement. This item will proceed to Council.	*In progress*
RS/15-16/06	**The Director of Research for the School of Business**	The Director of Research for the School of Business will lead a working group to examine best practice and alternative models for ethics approval.	*In progress*
RS/15-16/07	**Secretary to the Committee**	The Research Theme Review Initiative added to the agenda for the next Research Committee meeting.	*noted*
RS/15-16/08	**Directors of Research**	Consider the establishment of Faculty-level Research Committees.	*noted*

Table 1 *A list of Research Committee approvals and a status list of Research Committee actions*

RS/15-16/01   Introduction from the Dean of Research

The Dean of Research opened the first sitting of Research Committee 2015-16 and welcomed new members.

RS/15-16/02   Minutes of 26 May 2015

Meeting minutes were accepted with no revisions.

RS/15-16/03   Matters Arising from the Minutes

The DoR reported meeting apologies.

The DoR updated members on the Dean of Research Report (RS/14-15/77), proposing that the current format of the report be replaced with a more succinct, accessible, slim-line version for future editions.

ACTION: The Directors of Research requested to submit information and highlights demonstrating Schools' the wealth of research and innovation.

Some members suggested that the current DoR report fails to fairly reflect the spread of strengths across university and is biased towards the sciences. The DoR noted that metrics are important, but agreed that the DoR report needs to be revisited to ensure that it more accurately reflects the diversity and strengths of the university.

The DoR updated members on the 'Sustainability of TRIs' (RS/14-15/78) and suggested that this item be revisited to ensure that the value proposition of TRIs and their value to Schools is reconsidered and articulated more effectively. Members were informed that the DoR has created a group comprised of the Heads of TRIs and large funded centres. This group has been tasked with examining this sustainability issue and examining more strategic approaches for funding these entities.

The DoR informed that the University Overhead Policy (RS/14-15/79) is currently being trialled prior to review and revision.

Members were informed that the tenure-track (RS/14-15/80) is currently ongoing. The VP/CAO will revert to Research Committee on this issue shortly.

The DoR noted that the item on Research Excellence Criteria (RS/14-15/81) needs be revisited, particularly in the context of the University Rankings. Members were informed that the citation-rate was decreasing in some Schools, which could be attributed in some part to changes in methodology. The DoR informed members that a review of the impact of this change from InCites to SciVal would need to be undertaken, not to to increase the total number of outputs, but rather to develop and facilitate more impactful approach to publication. There is a risk that the current Research Activity Criteria could drive mediocrity.

The Director of Research for the School of Business indicated that a new workload- model had been developed in his School. As part of this new approach the School is radically targeting higher-ranked journals. It was

suggested that this approach be adopted across Schools to ensure a greater number of publications in high-ranking journals. The Director of Research for the School of Business cited data produced by the School, which shows that this approach has driven a cultural change in comparator institutions in which their overall number of publications are comparable to Trinity's, but the publications were in more highly ranked journals.

The Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities noted that academics must continue to accord the academic freedom to publish where they deem appropriate. He further noted at the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences has a different publication model, which must also be taken in to consideration. The DoR concurred with this and noted that it was the responsibility academics to drive the conversation on what the measures were most meaningful at a local level.

RS/15-16/04 Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies

The Professor in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, Loyola Institute, Dr. David Shephard presented a proposal for a Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies (TCBC) to the Research Committee.

The Research Committee requested clarity on how this proposed Centre would be differentiated from the Loyola Institute. The Committee was informed that this Centre would amalgamate and consolidate research from across the School and would also differ in that the Loyola Institute is funded from external sources.

The Research Committee also requested clarity on how this proposed Centre would avoid duplicating the Centre for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies. The members were informed that the Centre for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies does not have a research focus in biblical studies, and while the research focus for the TCBC does intersect in some aspects with that of the Centre for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies, the two Centres would complement each other.

Committee members also queried the current links between researchers in Near Eastern Studies and the proposed TCBC, particularly those that are currently engage in biblical studies research in the Centre for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies. Members were informed that there was an open invitation for these researchers to become involved in the proposed TCBC and that such academics welcome to become involved in the new Centre.

The DoR raised a query in relation to the Centre finances indicating that the new TCBC would not be a cost centre. Prof. Shephard confirmed that the proposed new Centre would not be a cost centre in first instance, but had aspirations to secure external funding.

A member suggested that the proposed Centre might be more aptly entitled the Trinity Centre for the Study of Sacred Texts, as this could be more open and inclusive and would provide the Centre with more scope for future development. Prof. Shephard conceded that, although the current research focus of the TCBS is biblical studies, the proposed Centre name might enable future development and critical mass. Prof. Shephard agreed that he would consider this proposal, but expressed a

slight concern that it might impact on the TCBS's ability to secure postgraduates with a particular profile and certain tranches of funding.

The Research Committee formally approved the application for the Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies (TCBS).

RS/15-16/05 'Our Common Future' Statement

The ADoR presented the 'Our Common Futures' Statement to Research Committee. The ADoR reported that the Conference of Parties (COP21), or the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, will take place in December. During this conference political groupings will meet to set carbon targets for the future. It was noted that this is a unique event, as for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, the groupings will aim to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, with the objective of keeping global warming below 2°C. This coincides with sustainable development goals and the establishment of carbon thresholds.

The 'Our Common Future under Climate Change' conference took place early this year and was attended by a diverse range of scientists involved in all aspects of climate change. The main output of this conference was the 'Our Common Futures' statement, which represents an historic opportunity to deliver a clear message to the Paris COP in December. Support for this declaration was sought by the French Ambassador. In addition, Trinity academics from the School of Natural Sciences had reviewed the statement also encourage the support of the Research Committee. The DoR also noted that the statement aligns with the core values of E3 and should facilitate links with industry.

The Research Committee suggested that it might be beneficial to explore opportunities for co-opting a Trinity academic on to the scientific committee.

ACTION: The ADoR indicated there may be scope to elect a Trinity representative to the committee and will follow up with the Chair of the newly established Future Earth Ireland (FEI) initiative in this regard.

The Research Committee formally supported the signing of the 'Our Common Future' Statement.

RS/15-16/06 Research Ethics and Integrity

The ADoR updated Research Committee on the Research Ethics Policy Committee (REPC) noting that the first REPC meeting is scheduled for the week commencing 19 October. Members were informed that items for discussion during this meeting include:
- A high-performance computing system for submitting ethics issues including streamlining the sign-off procedure. This new system has experienced technical issues due to complexities of moving between multiple different administrators, however, this is currently being resolved. A group is being established to review Level 1 and level 2 submissions following which the system will be

optimised and trialled before being rolled out across the University. The aim of this system is to increase accountability and reduce paperwork. The ADoR assured members that this system would be secured and monitored closely.

- Two research ethics working groups to examine issues associated with (i) data retention and biobanking and (ii) stem cell research. The ADoR noted that she sits on both of these working groups and reported that draft documentation had been prepared and would be presented to Research Committee in early 2016.
- The Lone Worker Policy. The ADoR informed members that this documentation was now complete and will be approved shortly by the REPC. Once approved, the policy will be presented to Research Committee.
- Department of Defence funding and ethics implications. The ADoR noted that a document had been created regarding this issue, which went before Council in July. Members were informed that Council found this document unclear and requested that it be revised. REPC will undertake the revision of this document, which will clarify that Trinity not undertake research with direct military use, however, this does not preclude securing funding from the Department of Defence for innocuous research, such as research on ovarian cancer, deafness etc.

The Director for Research for the School of Business commented on the need for a level 0 committee, noted that much research may not require ethics approval and that the current system was inefficient at managing innocuous research. He further comment that the terminology utilised by the ethics approval process is currently biased towards the sciences. The DoR suggested that other models and approaches should be reviewed and that the academic community/ Research Committee should drive this review. ACTION: The Director of Research for the School of Business will lead a working group to examine best practice and alternative models for ethics approval.

The ADoR noted that there was a requirement for an ethical imprimatur on research involving human participants. She suggested that a record could be kept either at School-level, or could be submitted to the internal university process. The Director of Research in the School of Histories and Humanities, noted that academics in the School of Histories and Humanities consult with the Director of Research in the first instance if they have any concerns regarding research ethics. ACTION: The ADoR will raise this issue with the REPC with input from the Research Director for the School of Business.

RS/15-16/07 Any Other Urgent Business

ACTION: The Director of Research in the School of Histories and Humanities requested that the Research Theme Review Initiative be added to the agenda for the next sitting of Research Committee.

RS/15-16/08 Research Committee 2015-16

The DoR informed members that the Research Committee would be restructured to increase its effectiveness. He noted that, in its current format, the Research Committee had too many members and that the

lecture-style structure of the meetings was flawed. The DoR indicated that he had raised this issue with the Faculty Deans and had agreed that balance of the Committee would be maintained across the Faculties, but the overall number of Research Committee attendees would be reduced. The new format will, therefore, include six members from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, four members from the Facults of Engineering, Maths and Science, and two members from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

The DoR also suggested that a full grouping meeting could take place biannually, at beginning and end of each academic year. The DoR also noted that members could alternate from Faculty if required. The new DoR noted that the new configuration would have an improved level of interaction.

The Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities informed the Committee that the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences has established a Faculty-level Research Committee. The DoR agreed that this could be an effective model for other Faculties to adopt to ensure the flow of information from the University Research Committee to the broader University community. ACTION: Directors of Research to consider the establishment of Faculty-level Research Committees.

RS/15-16/09 Trinity Rankings Strategy

The TARA Content Manager presented on behalf of the Programme Manager for Research Informatics on the research informatics tools and supports available to the Directors of Research.

The TARA Content Manager noted that there anomalies in the data, which need to be addressed including the occurrence of multiple name variations on publications. It was reported that addressing these issues and performing a data-cleansing exercise was a useful exercise and noted that this exercise had work well in the School of Histories and Humanities. It was further noted that this was not an onerous task and took a postgraduate that was trained by the library two weeks to complete. The Director of Research for the School of Business also reported that a postgraduate had completed a data-cleansing exercise for the School of Business.

The Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities raised a query regarding the status of the Rankings Strategy Project, which was approved by Board last year. The DoR noted that the project was approved with no pendant budget and was, therefore, impossible to implement. The DoR also highlighted the fact that establishing baseline data is key to the Rankings Project and that understanding the source, components and methodologies behind these metrics is crucial. The DoR stressed the need for Rankings to be a lens through which we do everything as a university. Particularly given that the University is close to slipping out of the QS top 200.

The Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities noted that 75% of AHSS journals do not appear on any abstract or citation database and that monographs not captured by these systems. He further noted that these systems not fit-for-purpose and suggested that the University pushback against these Rankings' agencies. The DoR noted that this must be a common issue shared by Universities worldwide and suggested that, as a research community, the onus was on academics in the arts and humanities to drive this rankings conversation. The DoR also noted, however, that rankings are real and that there is still a need to develop a strategy to understand the underlying figures behind the metrics. A member also noted the need to communicate the research taking place in Trinity more effectively with the global research community.

The TARA Content Manager also reported that the issue of open access for monographs is currently being examined and it may be possible, with agreement from publishers, to make part, or in time full, open-access for monographs.

RS/15-16/10 Trinity Web Presence

The Trinity Web Officer presented on aspects of the University's web-presence including staff profiles and the variance of these profiles across Schools and the lack of uniformity in the quality and size of images used on this profiles. She posed two questions to Research Committee members:

1)   Should all academic profiles be automated?
2)   Would a professional photoshoot be beneficial?

A member suggested that, as an alternative to a professional photoshoot, guidelines could be issued defining the optimal size and shape for a profile image.

It was also noted that the Centre for Deaf Studies would require profiles in sign language

RS/15-16/11 Any Other Business

None noted