

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 26 January 2016

Present:

Professor John Boland, Dean of Research (DoR), Chair  
Professor Martina Hennessy, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRMH)  
Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Director of Trinity Research and Innovation,  
Secretary

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences  
Professor Stephen Minton, Director of Research, School of Education  
Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú, Director of Research, School of Histories  
and Humanities  
Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology  
Professor Carol Newman, Director of Research, School of Social  
Sciences and Philosophy

Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science  
Professor Aoife McLysaght, Director of Research, School of Genetics  
and Microbiology  
Professor Jane Stout, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences  
Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics

Faculty of Health Sciences  
Professor Seamus Fallon deputising for Director of Research, School of  
Medicine  
Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dental Science

Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of Research, Trinity Long Room  
Hub  
Professor Aideen Long, Dean of Graduate Studies

In attendance:

Dr Oonagh Kinsman, Trinity Research & Innovation, Rapporteur to the  
Committee  
Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research  
& Innovation  
Mr David O'Shea, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services  
Division  
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations (IT  
Services)  
Dr Fiona Killard, Head of Strategic Research Initiatives, Office of the  
Dean and Vice President for Research (items RS/15-16/38 and 39  
only)

Apologies:

Professor Peter Gallagher, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRPG)  
Professor Roja Fazaeli, Director of Research, School of Languages,  
Literatures & Cultural Studies  
Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work  
and Social Policy

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

Professor Seamus Donnelly, Director of Research, School of Medicine

Not present:

Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of Research, CRANN

Professor Shane O'Mara, Director of Research, TCIN

Professor Orla Hardiman, Director of Research, TBSI

Mr Michael Cooke, Acting Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association

Ms Katie Crowther, President, Graduate Students Union

For circulation:

Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business

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

Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English

Professor Mark Bell, Director of Research, School of Law

Professor Lorraine Leeson, Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

Professor Andrew Pierce, Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics

Professor Daniela Zisterer, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Isabel Rozas, Director of Research, School of Chemistry

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

Professor Sergey Frolov, Director of Research, School of Mathematics

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

Professor Lorraine O'Driscoll, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Actions arising / on-going:

Agenda Item	Owner	Action	Status
RS/14-15/78	Dean of Research	Feedback on the reconsideration of the sustainability of TRIs and their value to Schools	<i>In progress</i>
RS/14-15/80	Vice Provost/CAO	Feedback on tenure track	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/15	Associate Dean of Research MH	Feedback revised policies and decisions from the Research Ethics Policy Committee on US Department of Defense funding to the February Research Committee	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/16	Research Development Manager	Feedback outcomes on areas requesting co-funding for a Research Programme Officer	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/30	The Director of Research for Genetics and Microbiology and the Director of Research for the School of	Lead further discussion on Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence	<i>In progress</i>

	Histories and Humanities		
RS/15-16/33	Dean of Research	Prepare a discussion document on retired staff and research activities	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/38	Rapporteur	Circulate the theme categorisation by the super-panel to all Directors of Research	<i>Complete</i>
RS/15-16/39	Dean of Research	Consult VP/DOR group of the IUA to see if all Irish universities were using ORCID identifiers and if any unintended consequences had arisen.	<i>In progress</i>

### RS/15-16/35 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The reconsideration of the sustainability of TRIs (RS/14/-15/78) has broadened. The DoR is working with Directors of TRIs and Centres to ascertain existing finances and overhead split arrangements.

There is no update on the paper on tenure track system for entry level academics (RS/14-15/80). A request will be made to the VP/CAO to feedback progress.

The highlights for the DoR report (RS/15-16/03) should be received by the end of January.

There is agreed rewording from the Research Ethics Policy Committee on the policy relating to the US Department of Defense funding (RS/15-16/15) and this will be brought to the next meeting of the Research Committee and then to Board and Council.

**ACTION:** ADorMH to bring this to the February meeting

The Research Development Manager reported that the evaluation of the Research Programme Officer funding submissions (RS/15-16/16) took place and further information is being sought from some areas. It is likely that a final position will be reached within 2 weeks and that there will be sufficient budget for a further call in due course.

No further feedback was received from the Research Committee on the Lone Worker guidelines (RS/15-16/30). The ADoR reviewed again the history of the development of these guidelines which was initiated in 2013 in the Research Ethics Policy Committee but had involved HR and the College Safety Committee. The Director of Research for the School of History and Humanities pointed out the requirements were problematic for academic staff in the Arts block as sign in to the building was an existing requirement and an additional approval from the Head of School was onerous. No students have access to the Arts Block out of normal building opening times. The DoR will liaise with the College Safety Officer and suggest one amendment to address this issue.

The Working Group on Research Productivity and Excellence (RS/15-16-30) is meeting on the 27 January to review existing measures and possible alternatives.

The discussion document on retired staff and research activities (RS/15-16/33 is in progress. The Research Development Manager summarised the existing practice that subject to internal approvals retired staff could seek approximately 20% of their salary through external funding but that HEA approval was needed if funding was awarded and this is currently given on an annual basis. The draft policy under preparation would cover instances where greater than 20% of salary was being requested, eg for an ERC award. She had met with Aveen Batt in HR to discuss how to approach the HEA to get approval in principle for such non-core funded salary and to obtain a faster approval for the proposed grant length. Contact may be made directly with the HEA or via the IUA This was well received from the committee members.

Action: The policy document on retired staff to be brought to the Research Committee

### **RS/15-16/36 Update on SFI centres and Future Research Leaders Programme**

The Director of Trinity Research and Innovation provided the timescale for Centre submission; EOI by the end of February, a preliminary proposal in April and the full proposal in November. The 3 centres under development were Precision Medicine (Lead Seamus Donnelly, including input from Professor John O'Leary and Professor Aiden Corvin on cancer and genetics) Nature + (Lead Professor Jane Stout and Professor Yvonne Buckley and Inflammation (Led by a number of academics in The School of Biochemistry and Immunology). He emphasised that we also need to ensure that Trinity academics are also included in non-Trinity led proposals. SFI will not fund more than one centre in any domain to it is also crucial get an understanding of the other centres under discussion. There will be greater visibility on SFI centres by the end of February and the VPs of Research may discuss openly the preliminary proposals in preparation.

The Research Leaders Programme is to replace the PIYRA programme and will be focussed on funding early and mid-career academics (3-15 years post PhD) for a period of 5 years with the expectation that a College position will be advertised in the last 2 years that funded Leaders can apply for. Trinity had been successful in receiving 40% of PIRYA awards. He understands there are no institutional limits on the number of applications allowed to be submitted from any one institution. It may be advantageous for new Ussher lecturers in the area of SFI's remit to apply to maximise the funding for research activity. It remains to be seen how candidates at the lower end of the experience level will fare in the competition. An Expression of interest deadline is on 8 April 2016 with a final deadline on 19 August 2016.

### **RS/15-16/37 Update on Innovation 2020**

The Director of Trinity Research & Innovation summarised the key messages from the new Irish science strategy document published on 8 December 2015. These included: growth in R&D from 1.6 to 2.5 GNP with no clear indication where this growth was going to come from; increasing masters PhD students by 30% and increasing post-doctoral researchers by 30%; the inclusion of a future PRTL programme for

infrastructure with no indication of a budget envelope; review of the research prioritisation in 2018; a strong focus on interdisciplinary research, the inclusion of AHSS in Grand Challenges with some specific funding but no clear details; inter-institutional collaboration; inter-sectoral collaboration with an emphasis on test beds for multinationals but no examples given. There is a focus on quality of PhD education with reference to the New Framework for Doctoral Education and mobility of PhDs out of academia to industry. The Grand Challenges included Improving Health and Wellbeing; Food Security; Climate Change, Energy dependency etc

The Director of The Long Room Hub who is also the Chair of the IRC emphasised the mandate within Innovation 2020 for frontier research and how this may be delivered within the IRC. The budget from DEJI has not been allocated yet. The Director of Research for Histories and Humanities asked how this could be influenced and what was the College strategy for influencing the research prioritisation. The DoR informed that there is effort required to influence TDs and Senators and that there would be coordination between the Provost, DoR, Director of TR&I and Director of Government affairs. The DoR indicated that five key messages need to be developed and this committee will have a role in this development. There are approximately 5-6 people in DEJI who are influential. It was noted that individual agencies have interpreted research prioritisation differently.

The Dean of Graduate studies commented on the proposed increase in PhDs. Although a Framework was launched last June there has been a hiatus since in developing a framework for implementation and the staff in the HEA have been redeployed. Numbers of PhDs in TCD have been falling while recently funded Centres have a large number of post doctoral posts available. She is discussing with the IUA group how to move forward with the shared modules developed for PRTL which has ended and how to provide for sustainability to avoid reinventing the wheel.

#### **RS/15-16/38 Thematic Review process**

The Head of Strategic Research Initiatives reviewed the super-panel review process and considerations. They were not tasked with re-reviewing the themes but the specific question were: Is the proposed research area sufficiently ambitious and compelling and of a scale to deliver the desired impacts? Is it unique? If not, is it sufficiently differentiated from initiatives elsewhere? Does it have the potential to become an international reference point in this area? In summary the superpanel was reviewing the strategic readiness of the theme. She reviewed the seven general recommendations to the university. The report categorised the themes as:

Category A. The team comprises world-class researchers/scholars that provide the scale and necessary infrastructure/facilities to become a flagship activity. The vision is strategically aligned with the realities of the funding opportunities available, effectively exploits the expertise of the PI base, and has the potential to differentiate itself internationally.  
Category B. Pockets of excellence among the PI base but lacking the scale necessary to deliver the required international impact. Potential

for strategic impact but significant gaps are evident in the team and/or facilities for the theme to differentiate itself internationally  
Category C. Excellence at an individual PI level but not the necessary scale. Articulated theme does not have unique selling point or perspective to generate the desired international impacts. Strategic significance is not adequately demonstrated.

Platform for Investment (PFI). The Super Panel recognized that a number of the proposed Research Themes were more realistically and helpfully regarded as arenas where Trinity should consider infrastructural investment to support the emergence of future research projects, initiatives and themes.

Six themes were categorised as Category A, 8 themes as Category B, 2 themes as category C and 2 themes as PFI.

It was agreed that the categorisation list would be circulated to all Directors of Research and that the full report would be circulated in due course.

The Super Panel congratulate Trinity on a radically collaborative two-year process which culminated in the presentations delivered to them by the Research Theme Champion(s). Assessments of each of the individual proposals should not be seen as a substitute for a research strategy and they urged Trinity, by means of an appropriate process, to develop such a strategy. The exercise in which they participated raised some important institution-wide issues and they hoped they could be helpful in the development of such a strategy, which could make Trinity much more than the 'best in Ireland'.

Both the Head of Strategic Projects and the Dean of Research emphasised that the super-panel were very engaged with the process and are willing to return to work with all the champions to assist in moving to the next level.

The Director of the Long Room Hub expressed serious concerns that themes that were categorised as A in the peer view were now judged to be B by the super-panel and vice versa and therefore there was a credibility issue with excellence. She also criticised the communication of the outcomes with embargos placed on dissemination. The Director for Research for the School of Histories and Humanities expressed disappointment that of themes relevant to the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences only 1 received the A category despite top ranking and that there was a perception that the process was a waste of time. The DoR who admitted that he had come into the process half way through was convinced by the thoroughness of the super-panel review and that they were asking different questions. It is understood that there is excellence in all themes but that taking into account the descriptors above there was a differentiation. He will be working with theme champions to encourage engagement and progression. He acknowledged that the report was not written for general circulation and that there was a concern how to release the information. In response to a question on next steps confirmed that it was an evolving situation. There will be a period of reflection and then a plan will be prepared.

The Director of Research for Psychology asked how the development of the research strategy would be progressed and would this be widened to take into account resource issues. The DOR agreed that a strategy would be developed as suggested by the superpanel but that resource issues complex as they are will also be addressed.

Action: The categorisation of themes will be circulated to all Directors of Research

#### **RS/15-16/39 Ranking Update and use of ORCID IDs**

The Head of Strategic Projects informed the committee that the Rankings Board and Steering group have agreed the use of the agency Quantup who have worked with German universities to help with analysis of existing data and modelling for the future. Work is also ongoing to make more value of the alumni data in the Razor's Edge database to assist the streamlining of communications along with audit of PIs collaborators. The Office of Scholarly Communication and Access to Research was still involved with citation cleansing and have provided missing information to ranking agencies. It is understood that Scopus still has limitations as a tool.

She described that ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) is a non-proprietary alphanumeric code to uniquely identify academic authors. ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes each researcher and, through integration in key research workflows such as manuscript and grant submission, supports automated linkages between researchers and their professional activities ensuring that their work is captured and recognized and ensuring that its impact and effect on ranking of Trinity is maximized. She described the addition of ORCID to the RSS system. The DoR will consult VP/DOR in the IUA to see if all Irish universities were using these identifier and if any unintended consequences had arisen.

The Director or the Long Room Hub asked how book chapters and monographs can be incorporated in the publication analysis more effectively. The Head of Strategic Projects confirmed that these issues had been raised as relationships were being developed with both QS and THES and that a change had already been made from Insight to Scopus which is broader and that in a visit in February to these agencies this point will be made again.

Action DoR will consult VP/DOR group the IUA to see if all Irish universities were using these identifiers and if any unintended consequences had arisen.

#### **RS/15-16/40 AOB**

The Director of Research for the School of Histories and Humanities requested the complete list of level 1 and level 2 ethics committees and encouraged all Schools to set up a level 1 committee as he notes that a number of applications are being made to the Faculty level which should be dealt with at the School level. The ADoR circulated the list at the meeting