

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 10 October 2017

Present:

Professor Martina Hennessy, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRMH),
Professor Peter Gallagher, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRPG)

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business
Professor Daniel Geary, Director of Research, School of Histories and
Humanities
Professor Brian Brewer, Director of Research, School of Languages
Literatures and Cultural Studies
Professor Blanaid Clarke, Director of 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 Gaia Narciso, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences
and Philosophy
Professor Jacob Erickson, Director of Research, School of Religions,
Peace Studies and Theology

Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science
Professor Declan O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Computer
Science and Statistics
Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Adrian Bracken, Director of Research, School of Genetics
and Microbiology
Professor Jane Stout, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences

Faculty of Health Sciences
Professor Jeffrey O'Sullivan, Director of Research, School of Dentistry
Professor Geralyn Hynes, Director of Research, School of Nursing and
Midwifery
Professor Helen Sheridan, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy
and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director, CRANN
Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub
Professor Orla Hardiman, Director, TBSI

Mr Shane Collins, President, Graduate Students Union

In attendance:

Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research
and Innovation
Mr David O'Shea, Director of Financial Services, Financial Services
Division
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian, Library
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT
Services

Dr Oonagh Kinsman, Trinity Research and Innovation, Secretary to the Committee

Apologies:

Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English
 Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy
 Professor Emma Creagh, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology
 Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director, TCIN
 Professor Orla Sheils, Director, TTMI
 Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies
 Mr Leonard Hobbs, Director of Trinity Research and Innovation

Not present:

Professor Nicholas Brown, School of Creative Arts
 Professor Ann Devitt, Director of Research, School of Education
 Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
 Professor Sergey Frolov, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
 Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics
 Professor Seamus Donnelly, Director of Research, School of Medicine

Actions arising / on-going:

Agenda Item	Owner	Action	Status
RS/15-16/63	Dean of Research	Seek final criteria for Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence from FEMS Faculty Dean.	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/49	Dean of Research	Feedback on progress with Research Career Framework policy from Tony McMahon	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/57	Dean of Research	Consideration of additional SITS functionality to provide data for source of funding for PhD fees	<i>In progress</i>
RS/15-16/62	Associate Dean of Research	Report to the Research Committee with policies on bio-banking, data retention and stem cells	<i>In progress</i>
RS/16-17/04	Dean of Research	Continued discussions on allocation of SFI overheads	<i>In progress</i>
RS/16-17/10	Dean of Research	Feedback any information on SFI research integrity audits	<i>In progress</i>
RS/16-17/20	Dean of Research and President of Graduate Students Union	Consider postgraduate representative forum as a mechanism to raise research concerns in the Dail	<i>In progress</i>
RS/16-17/23	Dean of Research	Provide details of internal programmes to promote visiting academics and external ERC applications on internal web	<i>In progress</i>
RS/16-17/28	Dean of Research	Through the IUA, contribute to a response on SFI's proposed governance model for Centres	<i>In progress</i>
RS/16-17/39	Dean of Research	Raise the possibility of part year PhD fees where funding was provided for less than 4 years with the Dean of Graduate Studies	<i>In progress</i>

RS/16-17/49	Dean of Research	DoR to request that LERU universities be set up as a cluster within SciVal.	<i>Complete</i>
RS/16-17/46	Associate Dean of Research MH	Provide a statement on progress with ranking discussions	<i>Complete</i>
RS/17-18/03 & 04	Associate Dean of Research MH	Review revised centre proposals for Centre for Environmental Humanities and Centre for Digital Business	<i>In progress</i>

RS/17-18/01 Matters arising from the minutes

ADoRMH informed the meeting that Professor John Boland had stepped down as Dean of Research. The appointment of a new Dean is in train but had not been approved yet. It is hoped that the new Dean will be in place by 1 December as the Vice-Rectors of LERU meet in early December in Trinity.

Professor Boland had been Dean of Research for two years and brought his international experience to this important role. During this time a number of achievements included joining LERU, the award of GBHI, the development of a draft strategy for Research Excellence, development of a rankings strategy, completion of the theme reviews and development of a research integrity structure. He was thanked on behalf of the committee for his contributions.

ADoRMH and ADoRPG will chair the meetings in the meantime, will sign off on any required letters of support from the Dean and will discuss with the new Dean the role and requirements of Associate Deans.

A number of actions arising will be rolled over until the new Dean is in place however some updates can be provided.

Comments on the draft Research Excellence Strategy were provided by the Executive Officers group in June. Further revisions will be held until the new Dean is in place however it is possible that the strategy document will contain the broad ambitions and a second operational document will be prepared for implementation processes.

The Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy asked if the strategy and implementation plans will come back to the Research committee and what approval if any will be sought. ADoRMH indicated that this might not happen until December. The Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities noted that the Faculty of Arts and Humanities had issues with the previous document and could not approve it as it stands. The Research Development Manager commented that the Research Development Office had worked with the Financial Services Division to provide intelligence on what research income might be achievable and that the figures reflected in the document should be re-evaluated and revised if an operational document is being prepared. (RS/16-17/46).

The SFI overheads policy required additional work on financial planning. The development and implementation of this policy lies with the Vice-Provost and this will be reviewed by Planning Group. The policy allowed for some strategic funding to be managed by the DoR.

Work on the Researcher Career Framework appeared to be paused (RS15-16/49)

A LERU research cluster has been set up in SciVal. The Librarian confirmed that it is being used productively and feeds into myPIQA and rankings analyses. The Director of Research, School of Business also commented that he also has access to it as a journal editor, recommended its use and has used it in the benchmarking of the School with other Business Schools. (RS16-17/49).

MyPIQA was in use by two Faculties and is being refined based on feedback. (RS/16-17/13)

The ADoRMH provided an update on the discussions with QS on rankings in June. We will not be penalised for the previous year anomalies and the rankings provided recently were back on track. She had no information on the Faculty or subject rankings. She would prepare a paragraph to clarify this update for wider circulation. (RS16-17/46).

Action ADoRMH will provide a statement on current ranking progress with QS

RS/17-18/02 Updates from the ADoRs

The ADoRMH welcomed the new Directors of Research and drew their attention to their roles and responsibilities.

New terms and conditions of SFI grants had been provided without any consultative process. The previous terms and conditions dated from 2006 with some amendments in 2011. The new terms and conditions were not acceptable to universities. These included indemnity and insurance clauses which intended to hold SFI harmless however this included state aid assurances which could not be complied with. Research integrity requirements included a level of governance that was greater than that agreed at a national forum. SFI also retained the right to unilaterally change the terms and conditions. Feedback was provided by the IUA to SFI however the Board of SFI had already approved the terms and conditions. Contract signature for new Centres has been delayed. SFI met with the Universities' legal officers ten days ago. A clause of comfort has been added and is being reviewed to see contracts can be signed or not. The Research Development Manager asked if the revisions will go back to the Board for approval but this seems unlikely within the next 12 months.

The ADoRMH also commented that SFI had carried out a research integrity audit including review of source data with a Trinity principal investigator without any discussion at an institutional level.

Mark Ferguson had briefed the IUA at a meeting where ADoRMH and the Director of Trinity Research and Innovation were present. This included his efforts to secure additional budget for the 4 centres which were deemed fundable. The universities were encouraged to use any available opportunity to highlight the value of the centres which were deemed fundable. He reviewed the possibility of joint appointments to attract

academics to Ireland and benefit from Brexit. He was pursuing strategic alliances with the Fraunhofer Institute in Germany to allow students to travel to and from this institute.

RS/17-18/03 Proposed Centre for Digital Business

This Centre was proposed by the Director of Research, School of Business on behalf of Professor Laurent Muzellec. The rationale for setting up this Centre was to leverage/show case existing in-house expertise, facilitate collaboration within the School of Business and across multiple disciplines within the university, and provide a brand to link with external initiatives. Dissemination and international visibility of TBS research would be increased, it would assist with the accreditation strategy and provide a point of contact with the business community. Their plans included creating a visiting research fellowship scheme, seeking company sponsored research, planning and coordinating research funding submissions, providing seminar series working papers and external engagement.

ADoRMH asked in the context of wider public engagement if the seminar series would be open to the public, if they has considered taking part in Probe (Researchers Night) or anticipated any interaction with the Science Gallery in the future. It was confirmed that the working workload model in the School allowed for 10% of time for external engagement by a number of means. The Research Development Manager asked for more details of the baseline of funding and where the increases might come. Corporate funding is the main funding and that is a pull for additional recruitment. The Director of Research, School of Computer Science noted that there were some mutual areas of interest with ADAPT and that these should be explored for future collaboration especially as there was already a FINTECH spoke in ADAPT. The Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences commented that this proposed centre was interesting but that there were other grouping of PIs without the need for Centres. The Director of Research, School of Business noted that the School is likely to reach 100 academics and there are no units within this School. The only other Centre is the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship.

Action: The proposal will be revised to take into account more information on links with other areas in College, will be re-submitted to the ADoRMH for approval without the need to return to present to the Committee again.

RS/17-18/04 Proposed Centre for Environmental Humanities

The Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities, Professor Katja Bruisch and Dr Ludlow presented. This Centre aims to become an intellectual platform of global consequence, promote inherently interdisciplinary research and provide teaching at under- and postgraduate levels both within the School of Histories and Humanities and beyond. Three projects were reviewed that exemplified the interdisciplinary nature of the research and the types of funding already received. The external engagement and impact on interdisciplinary teaching was reviewed.

AdoRMH asked what links had been made with E3 or with specific staff in Geography or Zoology. Discussions had taken place with some staff however it was noted that further linkages with E3 could be made. She requested that 'Trinity' be added to the title and logo. The Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy noted there also could be better links with other economic historians. The Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences noted that there was an existing Trinity Centre for the Environment which may cause confusion although this centre had not been active recently. She suggested that possible wider internal linkages eg with E3 should be explored and incorporated into their proposal. It was acknowledged that creation of a Centre created visibility beyond Trinity and will institutionalise the informal exchanges taking place in the Irish Environmental History Network. The Director of the Long Room Hub noted that one fellow was funded through the Hub's visiting fellowship scheme and asked for this to be acknowledged.

Action: The proposal will be revised to take into account more information on links with other areas in College, will be re-submitted to the ADorRMH for approval without the need to return to present to the Committee again

RS/17-18/05 Procedures for approval of Centres

It was agreed that in future that the proposers be asked to leave the room while the proposed centre is under discussion. It was also proposed that new proposals for centres be asked to address their links with other Schools and/or existing Centres. The Research Development Manager noted the growing number of Centres. Others commented that there is a different approach in different Schools where clusters of PIs already work closely together. It was agreed that the existence of a Centre was useful for external marketing. The Director of CRANN questioned the necessity and process of approval however ADorRMH commented that the processes were light touch and there were no central College resources provided. Submission of an annual report to the DoR is a requirement as is an active web site and an updated programme of activities. A lack of activities over a 1-2 year period should prompt a review and, those Centres which had reduced activity or were dormant should be asked to cease functioning as a Centre and remove the web site links.

RS/17-18/06 AOB

The President of the Graduate Students Union noted that the post-graduate fees had increased year on year and future increases were under discussion. The increases especially for non-EU students were causing difficulties especially as these are imposed during a PhD which are often self-funded. In the Faculty of Arts and Humanities 80% of students are self-funded. They have no certainty year on year. He asked that the ADorRMH send a memo to support the Graduate Students Union in raising these concerns and he would raise the matter at Board. It was also noted that this also impacted on requests to Schools to part-fund fees which are not covered by Irish funding agencies.

Action: ADorMH will provide a memo of support to maintain postgraduate fees at current levels.