

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 17 December 2008

Present: Professor Shane Allwright (*Board member and Chair*), Dr James Callaghan (*Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation, ADoTRI and Secretary*), Dr David Lloyd (*Dean of Research, DoR*), Dr Karen Walshe (*Board member*), Mr Ronan Hodson (*President of the GSU – ex officio*), Prof. Carol O’Sullivan (*Dean of Graduate Studies*), Professor R Stalley (*Heads of School representative*), Prof. Patrick Prendergast (*Vice-Provost and CAO*), Prof. D PA Kelleher (*representative of College research community*), Prof. Patrick Honohan (*representative of College research community*)

Apologies: Prof. Margaret O’Mahony (*Bursar*)

In attendance: Ms Maria Treanor (*Research Development Office*), Ms Deirdre Savage (*Nominee of Treasurer*), Ms Doris Alexander (*Research Development Officer*), Mr Eoin O’Dell for RS/08-09/03

The Chair welcomed new members and apologised for the postponement of the November 2008 meeting which clashed with an HEA PRTL I event.

**RS/08-09/01 Minutes 08 May and 19 June 2008**

The minutes were approved and signed. It was agreed that members will respond quickly with any comments on the draft minutes.

**RS/08-09/02 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

It was agreed that College Directors of Research will be invited to attend the next meeting on 29 January 2009.

It was noted that SFI have changed the mechanics of some of their calls. Applications cannot now be made to both the Research Frontiers Programme and the Principal Investigator Award Scheme.

**Section A: Policy Items**

**RS/08-09/03 Statutes Review Working Party**

Eoin O’Dell attended to brief members on the current drafts for chapters relating to committees and officers. A range of views was expressed and there was a consensus that the Dean of Research should be included as a Statutory College Officer. There was also consensus that Board creates Principal Committees as necessary to assist it in the performance of its functions.

**RS/08-09/04 Social Sciences Review**

The TCD Social Sciences Review was carried out by two external reviewers from the US. They produced a report which went through the Executive Officers Group for noting. Representatives from the Social Sciences then prepared a response to this report which broadly accepts the reviewers' recommendations. The reviewers noted that there is research being carried out in the area of social sciences in TCD which is of an international quality. Stellar activities have been identified and these should be developed with a view to strengthening disciplines. The reviewers also strongly support doctoral training.

It was also agreed that a Social Sciences working group should be established to drive the report recommendations forward. The working group will report to the Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

*Action: DoR to ask the Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences to write a response to the reviewers' report. This will be included with the original report and a covering note from the DoR and sent to Council and Board.*

*Action: Social Sciences Working Group reporting to the Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences to be established to drive the report recommendations forward.*

**RS/08-09/05 Research Ethics**

The Research Committee has received a request from Board to create a committee to deal with research ethics. There is not currently a College Ethics Committee and the document dealing with Good Research Practice has not been updated since 2002. TCD is precluded from collaboration with some US universities because it does not have a single institutional committee to give consideration to the use of human subjects in research. Currently, there are various committees at faculty, department and hospital level.

There is a need for a College Committee which sets College policy for approval of applications involving ethical considerations. This committee will not review research applications but will provide guidelines and an oversight for College and for faculty or school committees. It will be a committee of Board but not necessarily a principal committee. In addition, a working group from the Research Committee is needed to look at the current ethics committees in College and assess any deficits. They would report back on, for example, who these committees report to and their relationship with Faculty or School ethics committees. They would also consider emerging issues such as stem cell research. It was agreed that the DoR should form and chair this working group.

College recently received its first request for permission to use human stem cells as a comparative control. College currently has no policy to deal with the importation of human stem cells. A decision like this should be made through a College Ethics Committee. Even using a parallel process, a decision could not be made at this stage without very wide consultation. It was agreed that the DoR will request a report from University College Cork which recently permitted embryonic stem cell research on campus. The DoR will ask about the process used in UCC to arrive at their decision. It was also noted that legislation is being drafted to ban embryonic stem cell research in Ireland.

An on-line accreditation system for research ethics could be set up for College, and the software is already available in the UK. This could be integrated into graduate skills training.

*Action: Chair to discuss the possible status of a College Research Ethics Committee with the Acting Secretary to the College.*

*Action: DoR to form and chair a working group from the Research Committee to look at the current ethics committees in College and assess any deficits.*

*Action: DoR to request a report from University College Cork on embryonic stem cell research and ask about the process used in UCC to arrive at their decision.*

*Action: College Research Ethics Committee to be advised about on-line accreditation for research ethics, and the possibility of integrating this into graduate skills training.*

#### **RS/08-09/06 Entrepreneurial Activities and Promotion**

It was proposed by a member of staff that College does not currently take entrepreneurial activities into adequate account in relation to the promotion of academic staff. It was noted that consultancy should not be included in this category. Members agreed that applicants should be able to tick a box on the promotion application form if they are involved in entrepreneurial activities. The Working Group on Senior Promotions will assess how much weight should be given to these activities.

#### **RS/08-09/07 External Funding for Innovation**

The Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation (ADoTRI) briefed members on external funding for innovation and on using the expertise of people in this area.

IPSO Ventures has a European university portfolio. One of its founders, Chris Wright, is a former CEO of IP2IPO which partnered with the Oxford University Chemistry Department in a very successful post-incubation process for their campus companies. This partnership involved the provision of money up front in return for

50% of profits for the following 12 years. Similar deals were subsequently made with the universities of Southampton and York. Even with the current climate, it is still possible to receive funding in return for equity. In addition, College could also use IPSO's expertise to help gain a stronger track record with spin-out companies. The ADoTRI will discuss this possibility with Dr Wright and report back to the Research Committee. He noted that one of the advantages of working in partnership is that it frees the Principal Investigator up to focus on the research.

*Action: ADoTRI to meet Dr Chris Wright of IPSO Ventures to discuss external funding for innovation, and report back to the Research Committee.*

**RS/08-09/08 Any Other Business**

*Action: Sub-group including Chair and DoR to review College Strategic Plan 2009-14.*

**Section B: Implementation Decisions**

**RS/08-09/09 College Overhead Policy**

The DoR briefed members on the TCD Indirect Costs Policy. It went through the Finance Committee but was brought to the Research Committee because it is research-related. It is available on the Dean of Research webpage and will also be sent to all academics via the Secretary's Office. The policy was previously considered by the Research Committee at its meeting of 19th June 2008, and was approved by those present (and approved at a later date by others not in attendance at that meeting). It was subsequently noted by Finance Committee and Board.

*Action: DoR to send TCD Indirect Costs Policy to all academics via the Secretary's Office.*

**RS/08-09/10 Any Other Business**

*Action: Chair to request report from Working Group on Research Careers.*

The next meeting of the Research Committee will take place in the Board Room, No. 1 College, at 11.00 on Thursday 29 January 2009.

Signed: .....

Date: .....