

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 6th March 2012

Present: Professor Vinny Cahill (*Dean of Research, DOR, and Chair*)
Professor Derek Sullivan (*Associate Dean of Research, ADoR, and Director of Research, School of Dental Science*)
Professor John Horne (*Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities*)
Assistant Professor Aidan Seery (*Director of Research, School of Education*)
Assistant Professor Clemens Ruthner (*Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies*)
Associate Professor Crawford Gribben (*Director of Research, School of English*)
Professor Ailbhe Ni Chasaide (*Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences*)
Professor Malcolm MacLachlan (*Director of Research, School of Psychology*)
Maria Pierce in place of Associate Professor Suzanne Cahill (*Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy*)
Assistant Professor Ed Lavelle (*Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology*)
Professor Georg Duesberg (*Director of Research, School of Chemistry*)
Associate Professor Carl Vogel (*Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics*)
Associate Professor Anthony Quinn (*Director of Research, School of Engineering*)
Associate Professor Sinead Ryan (*Director of Research, School of Mathematics*)
Assistant Professor Andrew Jackson (*Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences*)
Professor Martin Hegner (*Director of Research, School of Physics*)
Professor Catherine Comiskey (*Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery*)
Associate Professor Carsten Ehrhardt (*Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences*)
Professor John Boland (*Director of Research, CRANN*)
Prof. Shane O'Mara (*Director of Research, TCIN*)
Professor Veronica Campbell (*Dean of Graduate Studies*)
Dr Erika Doyle (*Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association*)
Mary O'Connor (*President of the Graduate Students' Union*)
Dr James Callaghan (*Associate Director of Trinity Research & Innovation, ADTRI, and Secretary*)

In attendance: Ms Doris Alexander (*Research Development Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation*)
Ms Deirdre Savage (*Research Accounting Manager, Treasurer's Office*)
Dr Camilla Kelly (*Research Projects Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation and Minute Secretary to the Committee*)
Dr Margaret Woods (*Technology Transfer Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation*) for RS/11-12/44
Tony McMahon (*Director of Human Resources*) for RS/11-12/46

Apologies: Assistant Professor Gaia Narciso (*Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy*)
Assistant Professor Caoimhin MacMaolain (*Director of Research, School of Law*)
Professor Louis Brennan (*Director of Research, IIS*)
Professor Frank Barry (*Director of Research, School of Business*)
Professor Kevin Rockett (*Director of Research, School of Drama, Film & Music*)
Professor Pdraic Fallon (*Director of Research, School of Medicine*)
Associate Professor Norbert Hintersteiner (*Director of Research, School of Religions, Theology and Ecumenics*)
Assistant Professor Aidan Seery (*Director of Research, School of Education*)
Dr Geoffrey Bradley (*CSG Manager, ISS*)
Professor Seamus Martin (*Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology*)

Not present: Director of Research, Trinity Long Room Hub

Section A

RS/11-12/39 Introduction

The DoR welcomed everyone to the meeting. The DoR also informed the Committee that at its last meeting, Board approved the appointment of Professor Derek Sullivan (currently Director of Research, School of Dental Science) to the post of Associate Dean of Research.

RS/11-12/40 Minutes of 17th Jan 2012

The minutes of the meeting were approved by the Committee.

RS/11-12/41 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item RS/11-12/28 (referring to item RS/11-12/11 and RS/11-12/17): Research Ethics Policy. The DoR informed the Committee that the ADoR will continue to have Research Ethics within his remit and will reconvene the Research Ethics Policy Group in the near future.

Item RS/11-12/32: Research Quality Metrics (RQM). The DoR reported to the Committee that resource allocation via the RPM process had been considered by Board at its most recent meeting

and Board had agreed that consideration would be given to the appropriateness of using RPM as a tool for allocating funds in the future. However, it had been noted that there was a value to retaining some measures of research quality in resource allocation. It was also noted that the issue of weighting of multi-authored papers within the RQM had been raised at Council and that the DoR will be submitting a paper on the subject to the next Council meeting.

Item RS/11-12/33: Provost's Award for Research. The DoR noted that a paper on the subject will be submitted to the next Council meeting.

RS/11-12/42 Research Projections

The Committee noted a memo from Deirdre Savage, Research Accounting Manager, Treasurer's Office, which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Ms Savage spoke to the document.

The report provides a) a summary of data in relation to the financial year ending 30/9/2011 and b) research financial projections to 2017. The research projections are based on a number of assumptions, including the level of future funding available and historical success rates. An estimate of research expenditure (activity) indicates an overall decline in research funding, resulting in an approximate 30% reduction in TCD research activity in the next 5/6 year period, when compared to 2008/2009 results, levelling out at pre 2006/7 levels of ca. €68m.

Results of a 5-year review of activity are also given: 20 PIs (3% of total) were responsible for generating 35% of research income and that 20% of PIs (130 in total) actually accounted for 78% (€344m) of total research income in that timeframe.

The DoR emphasised that these projections are based on current activity. Members of the Committee noted that it is important that, going forward, Schools and Institutes have strategies in place to maintain/increase funding, for example, by having more support at local levels, such as local Research Project Officers.

The projected reduction in postgraduate student numbers was also noted as a concern.

RS/11-12/43 Research Project Officers - Call for Proposals

The Committee noted a document from Doris Alexander, Research Development Officer, Trinity Research & Innovation, which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Chair noted that, bearing in mind the current research funding projections, it is important that research activity is maintained at current levels. The creation of locally-based Research Project Officer (RPO) posts is a proposal aimed at supporting this goal.

Ms Alexander spoke briefly to the document which maps out a possible call for proposals for Schools to apply for co-funding of such posts. Various aspects of these proposed RPO positions, including post summary, standard duties, reporting lines, and person specification, were described.

One of the Committee noted that any application should require the applicant School/Institute to outline exactly what the RPO would do in the first year and what their plan of activity is beyond that. The DoR added that Schools should also think of relationships with Thematic areas.

The Chair then addressed the issue of funding. The Research Committee budget as it currently stands could fund the creation of 4 posts on the Admin 2 scale from non-exchequer funding sources. If any Schools or TRIs are in a position to co-fund these posts, more positions could be created.

The Committee approved the proposal to launch a call for proposals for RPOs and the use of the budget to fund or co-fund these positions.

RS/11-12/44 Innovation Task Force IPIP/IPIG Developments

Dr Margaret Woods, Technology Transfer Manager, Trinity Research & Innovation, briefed the Committee on developments relating to the work of the IP Implementation Group (IPIG) and the IP Policy Group (IPPG) established by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in 2010 and, in particular, a draft new national IP management protocol.

The draft protocol is focussed on “policies and procedures to help industry make good use of Ireland’s public research institutions” . Dr Woods proceeded to outline the various aspects of the protocol that are currently of major concern to College and indeed to the sector in general.

In response to the question asking how many academics were members of these working groups, Dr Woods answered that there were very few, and that neither TCD nor UCD were represented in the groups. The Committee voiced its concern over the whole tone of the protocol, noting that in its current form, the new protocol will hinder rather than encourage innovation in an academic setting.

RS/11-12/45 Innovation Activities

The DoR briefed the Committee on planned activities to stimulate innovation among the College community. One idea is to run an innovation competition for undergraduates.

RS/11-12/46 Redundancy - Risks and Issues

Tony McMahan, Director of Human Resources, briefed the Committee on some recent issues that have arisen in relation to redundancy.

1. The Redundancy Payments Acts 1967 - 2007 provides a definition of redundancy. Redundancy can arise in a number of situations, including that where the requirements of the business for an employee to carry out work of a particular kind in the place where he was so employed have ceased or diminished. This particular situation applies to researchers. To receive redundancy payments, the employee must have at least two years' service. TCD currently pays the statutory minimum payment.
2. The Croke Park Agreement ensured provision for no compulsory redundancies save where existing exit provisions apply.
3. A recent case that went against UCC highlights the risk to College of having to pay higher redundancy payments.
4. Funding of redundancies for staff receiving salaries from research grants: Many funding agencies do not currently fund redundancy costs, and this is an issue that must be addressed. The problem has been exacerbated since 1st January, when the employer rebate of statutory redundancy payments was reduced from 60% to 15%. There is also the issue of staff rolling over from grant to grant; there is no policy on who picks up the resulting costs. Pls must therefore be careful not to charge redundancy payments to research accounts where these payments are not an eligible cost.

The possibility of using overhead funds from research grants to fund redundancy costs was raised. It was also noted that the various funding agencies needed to clarify their stance on redundancy payments.

It was agreed that there needs to be a policy to address the above issues.

Action: The Director of HR agreed to draft a policy on redundancy payments to specifically address the following issues:

- *The circumstances under which a redundancy payment situation may arise*
- *Making provision for redundancy payments arising from research grants, for example, through overheads*
- *Addressing incremental accumulation of entitlement to redundancy payment*
- *Providing clarification of where/how the final cost of the payment may be met*

RS/11-12/47 Any Other Urgent Business
None

Section B

RS/11-12/48 Research Committee Budget
The Committee noted and approved the Research Committee Budget from the ADTRI, circulated in advance of the meeting.

RS/11-12/49 Research Strategy Implementation Update

The Committee noted a report to Board from the DoR, which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

The DoR also mentioned the recent visit to Brussels by a number of TCD representatives, including some thematic champions, aimed at influencing the direction and funding of elements of Horizon2020.

RS/11-12/50 Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Research Committee

The Committee noted and approved the proposed questionnaire from the ADTRI, circulated in advance of the meeting. Members of the Committee will be sent a link to enable them to complete the survey prior to the next meeting.

Section C

RS/11-12/51 Application for new Research Centre

The Committee noted and approved an application for a new research centre from Professor Malcolm MacLachlan, the Centre for Innovative Human Systems, circulated in advance of the meeting.

RS/11-12/52 Items for Discussion at Future Meetings

- (i) RQM Update

Signed:

Date: