

The University of Dublin
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 21 February 2017

Present:

Professor John Boland, Dean of Research (DoR)
Professor Martina Hennessy, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRMH),

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Professor Ruth Barton, Director of Research, School of Drama, Film and Music

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 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 Gaia Narcisco, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy

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

Professor Jacob Erickson, Director of Research, School of Religions, Peace Studies and Ecumenics

Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science

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

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

Professor Helen Sheridan, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Professor Orla Hardiman, Director, TBSI

Professor Orla Sheils, Director, TTMI

In attendance:

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

Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian, Library

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

Apologies:

Professor Emma Creagh, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
 Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dentistry
 Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub
 Mr Shane Collins, President, Graduate Students Union
 Mr David O'Shea, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
 Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services
 Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer

Not present:

Professor Peter Gallagher, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRPG)
 Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business
 Professor Stephen Minton, Director of Research, School of Education
 Professor Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology
 Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering
 Professor Sergey Frolov, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
 Professor Seamus Donnelly, Director of Research, School of Medicine
 Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director, CRANN
 Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director, TCIN
 Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies
 Mr Michael Cooke, Acting Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association

Actions arising / on-going:

Agenda Item	Owner	Action	Status
RS/15-16/63	Dean of Research and review working group	Complete the criteria for Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence in FEMS Faculty.	<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	Seek information on number of PhD students paying EU and non-EU fees and the source of funding	<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/16-17/13	Dean of Research	PIQA tool: A beta version will be trialled in one School from each faculty	<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/16-17/27 Matters arising from the minutes

The Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities asked that the wording of the minutes in relation to the PIQA tool be revised to indicate that it was the process of decision making within the Committee that he had raised. (RS/16-17/13).

The Research Productivity and Excellence criteria are complete for the Faculty of Health Sciences but one set of criteria has not been agreed across the Faculty of Engineering, Maths and Science. (RS/15-16/63).

The source of funding for PhD students is difficult to disaggregate from the Student Information System at the level of funder. Financial information from FIS also provides data that is not easy to analyse. Some limited additional investigations will be undertaken. (RS/15-16/57)

The Director of TTMI reported that there were three documents in progress in the Research Ethics Policy Committee (REPC). The first on stem cells is complete and will be presented at the next REPC; the second on biobanking is complete and will be presented at the next REPC; the third on data retention has yet to be written. The EU Directive last year which affects national and international policies on data retention will be reviewed by the REPC. (RS/15-16/62).

The first phase of overhead analysis has taken place with a committee chaired by the Vice Provost and with representation from the Financial Services Division. This phase relates to non-academic areas of College. It was appreciated that there are significant challenges with overhead spend and that this needs to be taken into account alongside the ABC process. The Vice Provost was also concerned to take account of teaching incentives in any revised overall budget processes in Trinity. The DoR admitted that all funding streams were broken and that the overhead did not cover the costs of doing research. (RS/16-17/04).

The Comparative Medicines Unit provided information on the specific actions already undertaken to increase openness. These included: Seminar for Transitional Year Students on why we need to use animals and a tour of the animal facility; publish medical, scientific breakthroughs using animals and as a matter of policy and refer to animal research in any press release when it forms part of the research in question; Coverage in the national press of scientific breakthroughs involving the use of animals.

Future activities include: Publish Concordat in CMU webpage; publish animal use information in CMU webpage since we issue this data regularly by FOI, but also because the HPRA is now publishing this data in annual reports and for the media and at times with no real context about the benefits of same. Provide information on CMU website of strong examples of research where animals are used and the benefits; take part in Trinity Week, or science week; choose suitably qualified and informed spokesperson(s) to deal with media requests.

The ILSA Concordat was endorsed by the committee. (RS/16-17/12).

A questionnaire relating to SFI audit of research integrity processes had been returned to SFI and the DoR is seeking information on any further proposed actions by SFI (RS/16-17/10).

The PIQA tool renamed MyPiQA is still being trialled in two Faculties (RS/16-17/13).

The Librarian circulated information from a meeting on FAIR data stewardship. (RS/16-17/17).

Referring to the HEA gender equality review, the DoR reiterated that the capacity to deliver silver accreditation in the time frame had been perceived as an enormous challenge by the IUA VP/DoR group. They have requested clarification on who mandated this requirement. (RS/16-17/24).

RS/16-17/28 Update from the Dean of Research

The DoR reported that SFI had proposed new governance models for Centres, that Steering Groups would be externally led and the Directors role was less visible. His view was that this was not workable for a number of reasons including the fact that some centres are multi-institutional and accountability became even more complex. It was suggested that some centres should progress to being legal entities. He appreciated that there were opportunities for spin-outs etc but that centres form a significant part of the universities strategy and that the universities need to keep control. Education and research are important and the industry collaborative element is not the sole purpose. The contracts with industry have also raise state aid discussions especially where there are unclear boundaries with respect to precompetitive/competitive research. SFI is seeking to indemnify themselves from any possible state aid issues. HRB seeks indemnification from patient issues which is acceptable.

Action: The DoR will link with the IUA and contribute to a response on SFI's proposed governance model for Centres.

RS/16-17/29 H2020 status and progress to FP9

The Research Development Manager emphasised that European 2020 (European Growth and Jobs Strategy,) H2020 and National policies are all interconnected. Trinity is doing well in financial drawdown in H2020 however the national target of €1.25 billion is challenging. From published comparative data Trinity was 19th out of 1337 education institutes that secured H2020 funding. The report to the Finance committee in October 2016 showed that Trinity had secured €59.9 million in the first 3 years with 63 proposals still pending funding decisions. We are heavily dependent on ERC grants to maintain our financial targets. All Schools except one are engaged and 16 Schools have received funding. In Europe there is currently a consultation process on the interim evaluation of H2020 which Trinity is contributing to via a number of groups including LERU. Mark Ferguson is part of the High level 'Lamy' group who will publish a report at the end of June. A report has been published on the inclusion of Social Sciences and Humanities. Countries

such as the UK with significant national funding in this area have more H2020 funding in this area than Ireland which has limited national funding. The European Open Science Platform was summarised. There is a current strong emphasis on keeping Europe together in the light of Brexit and attempts to realign funding from the Common Agricultural policy. A significant issue is the possibility of including defence research in FP9 which is currently being piloted in a separate programme. This would cause major issues for universities and we are lobbying to keep it separate. The European parliament is proposing total budgets for FP9 but there will be significant forthcoming political negotiations and dialogue. The core values of FP9 will be excellence, openness and impact. TCD is working externally with a number of organisations as to influence FP9 as this is a crucial time in the discussions.

The DoR commented that there is a link between national and EU funding and that, to achieve the H2020 KPIs, national funding needs a good base. ERC funding which is excellent basic research must have a foundation in national funding. The Director of TTMI commented that feedback through the Health Advisory Board that there was a move to higher TRL level of research and that there is a case for lower level TRL activity in collaborative research. The ADoRMH gave the view that the definition of impact should be broader in which case lower TRL activity would be possible. The Director of Research, School of Genetics was concerned that with the inclusion of Mark Ferguson on the Lamy committee these concerns would not be represented. The Research Development Manager commented that there was alignment in the viewpoints of a number of organisations eg EUA, LERU, COIMBA etc and that they were interacting with Kurt Vandenberghe in the European Commission who has a role in shaping FP9. How Brexit will affect this development is not clear.

RS/16-17/30 Ranking and next steps

The DoR reviewed the process of recalculation of our THE ranking for the last 2 years and how it was better to pull out of the ranking until accurate data could be analysed rather than be positioned outside the top 150. Our position as 131 is still a concern as the rate of slide is a problem. He emphasised that quality outputs are vital and that outputs from international collaborations were highly cited. He appreciates that this is not possible in some areas. He hopes that membership of LERU will assist with maximising the profile of Trinity. We need to ensure that stories which represent excellent research and scholarship are influential in getting this message across.

The Director of Research, Histories and Humanities who had recently attended a QS intelligence event commented that QS had the view that universities were taking the rankings too seriously, that it was a tool but only one tool. He agreed that we need to understand the methodology but that it should not drive strategy if it does not make sense. The Director of Research, School of Law commented that tools which are designed for research in science may distort work in other areas. The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science commented that measures that affected the balance of teaching and research were of concern as our students and our alumni are very influential. She appreciates however that numbers do matter as they

can affect student decisions. The DoR agreed that rankings were just one proxy of what is a complex system but that it is a game that we have to play.

RS/16-17/31 Barriers to world class research and scholarship in TCD

The DoR wanted to get views from the committee on what we can do in the absence of big investment to promote excellence.

A number of committee members were concerned about the time available for research. In NUIG for example sabbaticals are for 1 year while at Trinity these are for one semester. The administrative load is increasing with increasing bureaucracy so that there is little time to think. For example in the School of English there was a consensus in the past that one day per week could be free of teaching or meetings but this does not seem to be possible now. It was common practice in Schools such as Chemistry or Physics that teaching would be ramped up with time for new staff but this was not the case in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. In the School of English the number of academic staff has remained constant for 10 years but the administrative and teaching load has increased.

The Director of TBSI suggested that time spent to facilitate and enhance cross disciplinary research would be valuable and a strategy to break down silos is beneficial. This was one of the strategic aims of TBSI. She also believes that increased opportunity to work with industry is productive. The Research Development Manager commented that interdisciplinary PhDs had received research committee funding in the past.

The Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery commented that there are stretched resources at a School level and that the complexities in grantsmanship and interactions with funding agencies goes beyond the experience in the School.

The Director of Research, School of Genetics suggested that larger research groups have someone to provide advice on the administration relating to research activity post award but that this was not possible in small teams. Getting a PhD registered for example takes a significant time to complete.

The Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities made the point that significant change in staff student ratio provides an increased burden with increased essay and exam marking time. It was notable that the staff student ration is now 1:30 for this School which is greater than the average of 1: 14 of 100 comparable universities in this field.

RS/16-17/32 Crowdfunding

The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science provided an evaluation of the potential of a crowdfunding platform for pharmacy Research. She noted that Professor Lawrence Gill had raised €22,000 for a solar water disinfection system in 2010 and that

some organisations such as Kew Gardens were expert in this form of funding. They used a Senior Sophister student in Entrepreneurship to identify identify the characteristics of crowd funding campaigns, the crowd funding platforms available, topics which would perform best in a crowdfunding campaign and any target demographics. Data was collected from Facebook class contacts, pharmacists platforms, cold calling from a Pharmacist listing, alumni, School staff and contacts from the College noticeboard. Data was provided on demographics, suggested donations, topics etc. Existing platforms were reviewed. They plan to launch a reward based crowdfunding campaign focusing on cancer research to support the work of Prof Lorraine O'Driscoll.

The Director of TBSI informed that the 'Project MinE' raised €800,000 internationally for ALS research which Trinity benefitted from. She advised linking with the Trinity Foundation. The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Research indicated that she was keen that this initiative be branded within the School of Pharmacy but would make the Foundation aware. The Director of TTMI commented that the Irish Cancer Society may see this as competition for cancer research funding. It was suggested that this was a useful initiative and could be a template for rolling out in other Schools.

RS/16-17/33 AOB

None