

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 21 March 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 Stephen Minton, Director of Research, School of Education

Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English

Professor Daniel Geary, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities

Professor Roja Fazaeli, Director of Research, 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 Ruth Byrne, Director of Research, School of Psychology

Professor William Phelan substituting for 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 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 Geralyn Hynes, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery

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

Professor Orla Sheils, Director, TTMI

Mr Shane Collins, President, Graduate Students Union

In attendance:

Mr David O'Shea, Director of Financial Services, Financial Services Division

Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services

Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian, Library

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

Apologies:

Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dentistry

Professor Seamus Donnelly, Director of Research, School of Medicine  
 Professor Orla Hardiman, Director, TBSI  
 Ms Doris Alexander, Research Development Manager, Trinity Research and Innovation

Not present:

Professor Peter Gallagher, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRPG)  
 Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business  
 Professor Emma Creagh, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology  
 Professor Thorfinnur Gunnlaugsson, Director of Research, School of Chemistry  
 Professor Doug Leith, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
 Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering  
 Professor Sergey Frolov, Director of Research, School of Mathematics  
 Professor Martin Hegner, Director of Research, School of Physics  
 Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director, CRANN  
 Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, Director, Trinity Long Room Hub  
 Professor Mani Ramaswami, Director, TCIN  
 Professor Neville Cox, Dean of Graduate Studies  
 Mr Michael Cooke, Acting Chair, Trinity Research Staff Association  
 Dr Diarmuid O'Brien, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer

**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/16-17/39	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>
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#### RS/16-17/34 Matters arising from the minutes

The Trinity Visiting Academics Programme call closes on the 3 April. (RS/16-17/23).

The myPIQA pilot has ended and a report of feedback from the Schools involved is being prepared (RS/16-17/13).

The data required for the latest THE and QS rankings is being prepared according to the criteria required for each which differs especially in the interpretation of the different types of personnel. The data will be reviewed next week by the Rankings Steering Group chaired by the Provost and then the returns will be formally submitted (RS/16-17/30). The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences asked how the subject rankings were affected by the omission of data that had taken place last year. The DoR explained that the surveys use rankings over a number of years but as we were missing one year the data used goes further back in time so is more out of date. This year the analysis will use more up to date information. The Director of Research, School of Languages Literatures & Cultural Studies informed that a letter had been sent to the Provost expressing serious concerns on the current subject rankings. The DoR informed that these concerns were being considered and a meeting set up to review. He also stated that subject rankings were also subject to change and challenges as the outputs from different disciplines may be treated differently with time eg the discipline of Psychology. He also emphasised that quality not quantity is sought in outputs.

There are data issues in contacting alumni for crowdsourcing purposes. Where individuals join a LinkedIn group there is no issue as they have subscribed. LinkedIn has proved better than Facebook for tracking careers. (RS/16-17/32)

#### RS/16-17/35 Update from the Dean of Research

The DoR discussed the review of endowed chairs and that each proposed chair needs an internal champion. These chairs need to be prioritised as it may be unworkable to have several chairs in similar areas. He also suggested that TCD staff could play a role in engagement with alumni to maximise the philanthropic campaign. He suggested that where international trips are planned an additional engagement with alumni could be arranged and a presentation provided.

Information for the next edition of the Dean of Research semi-annual report will be sought for publication after the summer. The TCD 1916 commemorative booklet is at the printers.

Through a working group in the IUA, the proposed new terms and conditions for SFI funding have been reviewed and a document prepared with general concerns and specific wording of issue identified. This includes reference to State Aid and indemnities. This is in addition to the previous concerns on proposed governance of Centres. Overheads paid by SFI are also under discussion. SFI are open to suggestions for topics for targeted Research Professorships and they are planning an advertisement in Nature to capitalise on the Brexit uncertainty and attract key talent to Ireland. The DoR asked for feedback on any topics for such Professorships. The Expression of Interest for the next round of the SFI President of Ireland Future Research Leaders Programme is 5 May 2017.

The DoR asked Prof Orla Sheils to update the committee on discussions from the Research Ethics Policy Committee. This committee was reviewing the processes and systems for ethical review. There are 22 School ethics committees and the processes have been paper based. However these are not amenable to audit and is not best practice for monitoring requirements of research ethics committees included in the declaration of Helsinki. A trial has used a system internally produced by HPC however it is also appropriate to review commercially provided systems and the company Informatica is going to present their ethics applications software system used by 20 universities in the UK to Trinity.

#### **RS/16-17/36 Trinity Centre for Excellence in Ageing and Intellectual Disability**

Professor Mary McCarron presented a five year plan for the first dedicated specialised Centre on ageing, health and wellbeing for older adults with an intellectual disability. She emphasised that Ireland has a national database of people with intellectual disability. This sector of the population have a high level of health need including polypharmacy. The proposed centre will underpinned by the Intellectual Disability Supplement to the TILDA study. They will link with GBHI especially the NEII project. The centre aims to build capacity and sustainability. One Ussher lecturer has been appointed in this area. Key performance indicators were presented.

The Director of Research, School of Education asked how this centre was differentiated from existing centres eg Trinity Ageing Research Centre. She replied that Trinity EngAGE was well established and this fitted in this theme but there was a need to have a focus on intellectual disability to offer a specific focus for philanthropy. The Director of Research, School of Psychology also asked how this proposed centre links to the National Institute for Intellectual Disability or the Trinity Centre for Intellectual Disability. Prof McCarron noted the links but while one has a focus on education, this proposed centre was specifically focused on ageing and that there were a number of internships and Masters specifically using the IDS-TILDA data. The Librarian also suggested that a links to Arts and Humanities should be established where possible. The President of the Graduate Student Union supported the Centre and noted the establishment of the recently established MSc in Ageing and Intellectual Disability. The DoR noted that there was sufficient scale in the Ageing research space in College that it was appropriate to have a number of foci.

The establishment of the Centre was approved.

#### **RS/16-17/37 Trinity Centre for Beckett Studies**

Professor Sam Slote and Professor Nicholas Johnson presented this proposed Centre. Research is linked to all 5 Trinity humanities research themes including Identities in Transformation, Making Ireland and Manuscripts and Books. The Centre will bring together a number of existing activities. It will capitalise on the very successful Summer School and provide a year round activity, help the bid for a future Samuel Beckett Society Conference, form a focus for philanthropy and facilitate interdisciplinary grant applications. Further discussion covered the role of the Samuel Beckett laboratory and the links to the artistic community. Other major Beckett centres were reviewed but a unique aspect of this proposed centre is the breadth of activity proposed and the interdisciplinary engagement often missing in these other centres. It was emphasised that it was intended to work collegially with these other centres and use Erasmus Masters Exchanges to promote this. It is intended to introduce visiting fellows and funded PhDs. The Centre will be housed in the Long Room Hub which will promote activity from a number of Schools. Possible linkages for the future are with medical humanities and brain science.

The establishment of the Centre was approved.

#### **RS/16-17/38 Research Strategy Development**

The DoR presented some aspects of the development of a Strategy for Research Excellence and asked for comments and input. He presented the current source of research income and noted the reliance on SFI funding and associated industry focus. We need to be aware of the current environment including a possible reduction in funding from the US, the effects of Brexit and the limited funding for frontier research in Ireland. We need to grow the budget for research in this climate. He understands that research income is only one aspect and Schools vary in their requirements. Industry funding may be increased but there needs to be a balance and the mission of the university needs to be taken into account. It is critical that we have analytical tools that allow both the organisation and individuals to make clear decisions that will enhance or support excellence.

Considering investment in people, centrally and locally based research development support is available. It was proposed that there is a need for additional Executive Officers at a local level to assist with post award research management to reduce the administrative burden on PIs. The numbers of postgraduate researchers has declined recently. The TCD PhD scholarship programme will be expanded to increase the number and fully fund the scholarships with a focus on junior faculty. Succession planning will be put in place in areas of strategic investment. Opportunities for growth will be identified and external funding initiatives and philanthropic campaigns will be targeted at prioritised positions.

Building communities will increase the impact of publications through collaboration and promote interdisciplinary activity. These groupings will also assist in identifying strategically important areas for philanthropic approaches. We also need to develop compelling impact case studies. Rebalancing of overheads distribution towards research delivering entities will enable strategic development. TCD will maximise its membership of LERU to influence EU policy and national funders. The provision of enabling infrastructures is a core challenge especially the provision of research space. He would also like to see a defined space set aside for visiting academics. Equipment need to be upgraded especially in areas outside of the SFI remit and in the absence of assured PRTL capital funding.

Further discussion on aspects of industry funding raised issues of ethics especially with some areas of research. It was noted for example that defence research funded currently funded from the European Defence Agency is not amenable to university research and there are current efforts to lobby that these elements are not included in FP9 which would make part of the programme unavailable or difficult for us to access.

The Director of Research, School of Genetics and Biochemistry agreed that the proposed PhD programme was needed, that post award administrative would be helpful and commented on the potential for new frontier research from the IRC. The Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services commented that administrative processes should be streamlined to reduce administrative burden while what is happening is that additional administration is being passed to the Schools. The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Services agreed that the proposed PhD programme was positive and asked for more details. The studentships will be fully funded for 4 years and non-EU fees will paid if necessary. She also emphasised that individual academics have multiple calls on their time and this affects research activity. The Director of Research, School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Science asked for assistance for smaller Schools to build relationships with industry and for opportunities to build internal collaborations. The President of the Graduate Students Union commented on the increase use of social media to promote research activity. He also noted that accommodation was an issue especially for attracting international postgraduate students.

#### **RS/16-17/39 AOB**

The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences noted that some funding for PhDs was only for 3 years and that it was now required to pay the full 4<sup>th</sup> year of fees even if the registration was only need for a few months. This is quite challenging especially for some international students. She requests that part year fees be reinstated. The DoR will raise this with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Action DoR to raise the possibility of part year PhD fees where funding was provided for less than 4 years with the Dean of Graduate Studies.