

The University of Dublin  
Trinity College

Minutes of Research Committee Meeting, 16 May 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 Daniel Geary, Director of Research, School of Histories and Humanities

Professor Roja Fazaeli, Director of Research, School of Languages Literatures and 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 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 Emma Creagh, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry and Immunology

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 Seamus Donnelly, Director of Research, School of Medicine

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:

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

Mr Leonard Hobbs, Director of Trinity Research and Innovation

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

Apologies:

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

Not present:

Professor Peter Gallagher, Associate Dean of Research (ADoRPG)  
 Professor Brian Lucey, Director of Research, School of Business  
 Professor Sam Slote, Director of Research, School of English  
 Professor Trevor Spratt, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
 Professor Doug Leith, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics  
 Professor Luiz Da Silva, Director of Research, School of Engineering  
 Professor Gary Moran, Director of Research, School of Dentistry  
 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  
 Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services

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/16-17/13	Dean of Research	PIQA tool: Feedback from the trial will be discussed with the Head of Schools prior to roll-out	<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>In progress</i>
RS/16-17/51	Dean of Research	Convene a meeting to discuss the Research Excellence Strategy in June	<i>Complete</i>

#### RS/16-17/45 Matters arising from the minutes

The Director of the Long Room Hub had suggested that the Ranking Strategy could be an item for discussion and requested feedback from the meeting with QS. The DoR intended to cover this in his update. (RS/16-17/44).

The FEMS faculty executive has agreed the criteria for Measuring Research Productivity and Excellence. The Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology advised that the DoR should contact the Dean of the Faculty. (RS/15-16/63).

The DoR had contacted Tony McMahon for an update on the Research Career Framework policy but he was on leave. (RS/15-16/49).

The DoR suggested that funding could be made available to provide modification to SITS to include a drop down list of source of funding to include the major sources of funding to allow easier analysis of funding for each PhD student and possible shortfall of fees from Irish funders. (RS/15-16/57). He commented that there was no consistency of approach between SFI and IRC on the payment of fees. He is aware that Schools are being tasked with sourcing the shortfall and this is a disincentive. There is also a disincentive to hire non-EU students.

Action: DoR will investigate the funding of additional functionality to SITS to assist analysis of funding data for PhD students. (RS/15-16/57)

#### RS/16-17/46 Update from the Dean of Research

The DoR, the Provost and Head of Strategic Projects met with QS to discuss the impact on Trinity of the steps QS had taken to remove Trinity's data for one year which significantly affected the rankings. They emphasised to QS that the action was perceived as punitive by Trinity and that other universities had not been similarly treated who had provided similar emails. They suggested a strategy to ameliorate this effect and discussions are on-going. A communication is being prepared by the Director of Public Affairs and Communications who will consult with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Director of Research, School of School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences and the Director of Research, School of Law asked what communications would be made to staff and what messages should they be giving eternally. The DoR advised that the department statements can include rankings over a number of years and that the new rankings from QS will be available soon and a rebound is expected. He

was of the view that it would not be beneficial to Trinity to broadly communicate the problem again. However a number of committee members pointed out that there was no other narrative in the media and google searching provided the negative story which could be balanced with some positive statements following the outcome of discussions with QS. The Director of Research, School of Drama Film and Music emphasised that damage limitation was required since UCD are now claiming they are number 1 university in Ireland in 40 subject areas and this is likely to affect postgraduate student applications. This point was supported by the Director of Research, School of Education. The Director of Research, School of Medicine had visited Singapore recently and was asked why Trinity was not now the number 1 university in Ireland and that this is reflective of the international reputational damage. He asked that the Dean take action to ensure that the institutional ranking which places us higher than UCD does not get lost in the focus on subject rankings.

The outcome of the SFI centres was known. Trinity led INNATE was not funded however there is an on ongoing discussion with SFI about seeking additional funding to support the centres that were deemed fundable. All SFI grants were on hold until the terms and conditions had been agreed. He noted that SFI had announced a co-funded programme with EPSRC. There was a previous co-funded programme with BBSRC but there is no confirmation if this is being continued. There was also a new co-funded programme with the Simons Foundation for funding in the area of Theoretical Physics, Computer Science and Mathematics.

Trinity had a successful H2020 week with a recognition events for funded PIs and a separate event to recognise ERC funded PIs. Five ERC award holders also took part in a public engagement activity to explain their work. The work of TR&I and specifically the Research Development Office and other support areas was acknowledged in supporting this programme.

## **RS/16-17/47 Research Integrity**

The ADoRMH described issues relating to Research Integrity shared though LERU and obtained from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). There is no good definition of research integrity but it does include falsification, fabrication and plagiarism. She gave the example of a high profile scientist who was an ERC awardee in a European Institution. He had been suspended for 2 years as he had breached his duty of care in the handling of figures as well as in his supervisory duties as a research director and the breaches were classified as scientific misconduct and resulted in many retractions and corrections. Research funding was withdrawn and the lab closed. There was collateral damage in collaborating labs. Data from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) had analysed cases over 20 years. She described the potential scale of the problem from published surveys and data that UKRIO had sought from its subscribers. Factors driving misconduct were reviewed. She described the Research Integrity regulations at EU level and interventions to improve the level of integrity or enable high levels. The EU Code of Conduct will be adapted to new challenges, activities related to

Research integrity are being funded via Horizon 2020 and cooperation with the national integrity bodies will be reinforced.

Trinity is using the National guidelines produced by IUA. The Research Ethics Policy Committee defines Research Integrity / misconduct in the Good Research Practice guidelines and the process for investigation is detailed in the Calendar. The Case Record management policy now covers research records. There are 22 Ethics Committees and the Research Integrity Officer is Professor Brian McGing. Trinity can seek advice from UKRIO and is a member of the LERU RI Thematic Group. Reports re required to be submitted to SFI and NIH. She described the Trinity experience from 2013 to the present. She concluded with questions including; What is our denominator?; What is our culture and what are the practical constraints?; what is the right of individuals to reply and what actions might funders take if we can't /won't police ourselves.

The DoR commented that this topic is looming large with funders especially SFI. The Director of TTMI commented on the use of open data to interrogate data sets. The Director of Research, School of Pharmacy commented on the authorship issues and the need for guidelines for authorship. Schools can look at their own analyses. Certain universities could be picked for further strategic interactions.

#### **RS/16-17/48 BREXIT; strategic collaborations with UK universities.**

The Head of Strategic Research Development, Office of the Dean of Research presented an analysis of Trinity's collaborations with UK universities from 2011 to 2016 according to the Scopus database. A further mapping exercise analysing UK universities that map to Trinity's strengths was also undertaken with a wider set of indicators and analysed from the perspective of Faculty, School, discipline, theme or TRI. A frequency of occurrence of a particular university was examined by Faculty and from a whole-University perspective and a 6-tiered strength map was generated. The limits of such an analysis were also highlighted to the members, e.g., The School of Law has particular expertise in Irish law, which may not map closely to strengths in Law faculties in UK universities.

The Director of Trinity Research and Innovation asked if there was any correlation to activity in European funding and that some in the lower tiers may have more to gain with engagement. It was also noted by others that Queens University did not feature in the tiers despite being identified as a top collaborating institute with Scival collaborative publications. Members of the committee asked how these data could be used to best effect. The Librarian and the Manager of the Research Development Office were interested in looking at LERU members specifically. There may be, for example, an opportunity to maintain links with UK universities post-Brexit, or to promote Trinity as an English speaking partner as a substitute for UK universities in areas of strength. The DoR emphasised that he was looking to have Superusers of Scival within Schools so that questions can be posed at a School level. The Head

of Strategic Research Development noted how useful the analysis had been for mapping the cancer themes strengths

#### **RS/16-17/49 LERU committee mapping and update**

The Director of the Provosts Office gave information on this association whose purpose is to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practices through mutual exchange of experience. She summarised the structure which included the Board of Directors, The Rectors Assembly and groups with appropriate Trinity representatives. Within the first 4 months of membership Trinity has contributed to papers on the following; views on the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, FP9; request for examples that showcase the importance and impact of the EU research funding; Research Infrastructures paper; Societal Impact of Academic Research in the Knowledge Society; Response to EU data protection regulation paper. Discussion topics included practical issues for information sharing, How best to work within LERU group system and how to maximise benefits of our membership.

The Director of Trinity Research and innovation asked if Brexit was on the agenda for the Rectors meeting. It was not on the agenda as the UK universities are taking the approach that it is business as usual however informal discussions are likely. The Director of Research, School of Medicine asked that the LERU universities could be set up as a cluster within SciVal. The Librarian noted that there are significant discussions within LERU on the funding of scholarly communications and open access

Action: DoR to request that LERU universities be set up as a cluster within SciVal

#### **RS/16-17/50 Full Economic Costs**

A paper from the Financial Planning and Risk Manager on Full Economic Costs was provided for noting especially the difference between the FEC indirect cost rate versus the actual rate received.

#### **RS/16-17/51 AOB**

The Secretary's Office had asked that the committee investigate the use of Boardpad for the circulation of papers for the meeting to assist electronic circulation of material. However this necessitates the use of an iPad. The feedback survey for the committee will include a question on the access to iPads. The pros and cons of such a move will then be determined. At present there is electronic circulation of papers for the Research committee.

The DoR informed that there would be an additional meeting arranged to discuss the Research Excellence strategy in advance of submission to Board in June. The document will be circulated and written feedback sought. The Director of Research, School of Psychology requested that they consult more widely in their Schools.

Action: Convene a meeting to discuss the Research Excellence Strategy in June.