

**The University of Dublin  
Trinity College  
RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**11:00, 9 April 2024  
Boardroom, Trinity Business School**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees**

Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research (Chair)  
Prof. Brian Broderick, Associate Dean of Research  
Prof. Immo Warntjes, Associate Dean of Research  
Prof. Padraic Fallon, Associate Dean of Research  
Prof. Nicholas Johnson, Director of Research, School of Creative Arts  
Prof. Joseph Roche, Director of Research, School of Education  
Prof. Darryl Jones, Director of Research, School of English  
Prof. Jane Ohlmeyer, Director of Research, School of Histories & Humanities  
Prof. James Hanrahan, Director of Research, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultural Studies  
Prof. Claire Gillan, Director of Research, School of Psychology  
Prof. Edurne Garcia Iriarte, Director of Research, School of Social Work and Social Policy  
Prof. Ed Lavelle, Director of Research, School of Biochemistry & Immunology  
Prof. Mathias Senge, Director of Research, School of Chemistry  
Prof. Marco Ruffini, Director of Research, School of Computer Science & Statistics  
Prof. Michael Monaghan, Director of Research, School of Engineering  
Prof. Andrei Parnachev, Director of Research, School of Mathematics  
Prof. Yvonne Buckley, Director of Research, School of Natural Sciences  
Prof. Ortwin Hess, Director of Research, School of Physics  
Prof. Sarah Doyle, Director of Research, School of Medicine  
Prof. Sharon O'Donnell, Director of Research, School of Nursing & Midwifery  
Prof. Kingston Mills, Director of TBSI  
Prof. Aideen Long, Director of TTMI  
Prof. Eve Patten, Director of Trinity Long Room Hub  
Prof. Eoin O'Sullivan, Senior Dean

*In attendance*

Ms Mary Tracey, Executive Director, Trinity Innovation & Enterprise  
Dr Gordon Elliott, Trinity Innovation & Enterprise  
Prof. Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies  
Dr Sally Smith, Director of Research, Trinity Research  
Dr Raquel Harper, Head of Research Development, RDO, Trinity Research  
Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director for European Engagement, Trinity Research  
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services  
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist  
Mr Michael Reilly, Laboratory & Research Category Manager, Procurement, FSD  
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy Officer, Trinity Research

*Apologies*

Prof. Sakis Mantalaris, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Prof. Mark Bell, Director of Research, School of Law  
Prof. Catherine Welch, Director of Research, Trinity Business School  
Prof. Benjamin Wold, Director of Research, School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies  
Elaine Sharkey, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division  
Prof. Frank Wellmer, Director of Research, School of Genetics & Microbiology

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<b>Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval</b>	
<b>A.1</b>	<p><b>Minutes</b> Minutes from the meeting of March 12<sup>th</sup> were circulated in advance and approved.</p>
<b>A.2</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b> DOR noted that there was an action to follow up with FSD and HR re salary costs/budgets and advised the committee that this would be held over until the next meeting.</p>
<b>Section B - Items for Discussion Only</b>	
<b>B.1</b>	<p><b>RS/23-24/17 Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information</b> Christoph Schmidt-Supprian, Head of Content Management &amp; Open Scholarship</p> <p>The committee was presented with an overview of the Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information. During the presentation the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declaration was drafted in Barcelona in November 2023. Signatories include LERU members, but LERU itself has not signed it.</li> <li>• The document specifically articulates principles around making research information open, free to use and free from restrictions on reuse. This includes bibliographic metadata, metadata on research software, research data, samples and instruments, information on funding and grants, and information on organisations and research contributors.</li> <li>• There are already many open data sources and initiatives, but closed systems still persist. For example, Elsevier metadata is still closed and research information is not accessible outside of Elsevier platforms.</li> <li>• Signing the declaration would not oblige signatories to immediately unsubscribe from closed platforms. Some institutions have done so because it worked for them in the context of their national landscape. Other signatories have developed implementation plans that would move them towards full implementation over 3 - 5 years.</li> <li>• Trinity currently subscribed to the following closed systems: Web of Science, with InCites (Clarivate); SCOPUS, with SciVal (Elsevier); Overton.</li> <li>• The HEA System Performance Framework 2023-2028 lists “SciVal Bibliometrics Citation Impact” as one of five indicators.</li> <li>• University rankings use SciVal or InCites for publications and citations data.</li> <li>• The openness of research information is an integral part of the Open Scholarship agenda. It was noted that the main obstacles so far would be the need for investment in time and money which is unclear at present, and the need to phase out the use of closed platforms and tools like SciVal, InCites etc. The opportunities include savings from subscriptions etc, and the investment in our own data as well as increased transparency.</li> </ul> <p>In discussion with the committee the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The various open access systems have different funding models. OpenAlex was cited as an example - it receives funding from the Arcadia Foundation and the French Ministry of Higher Education recently announced it would also begin contributing to it. The committee noted the importance of knowing who funded open systems before Trinity chose to use or subscribe to them.</li> <li>• Members of the committee reiterated their concerns with the excessive costs charged by some journals to publish open access articles, as well as other issues</li> </ul>

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	<p>related to open access such as the cost of making monographs openly available, and how best to support researchers in the move towards open access. The committee was advised that the Barcelona Declaration was in relation to a specific aspect of research information that could be applied to closed journals. It was specifically concerned with the openness of metadata. It was also noted that the quality of peer review was not guaranteed just because a journal was closed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that the NORF agenda aims for 100% open access so the committee and Trinity would need to have more discussions around what this means for the university.</li> <li>• The Barcelona Declaration would have implications for participation in university rankings as the major rankings agencies used closed systems to generate their rankings data. It was noted that some Spanish and Dutch universities wanted to withdraw from rankings. It was noted that the different national landscapes made this more complicated for Trinity and Irish universities. Concerns related to the rankings were noted as some of the concerns LERU members had raised.</li> <li>• Members of the committee noted that a major issue for research in AHSS disciplines is not that the metadata is closed but rather that these closed systems do not capture research in those areas in the first place. It was noted that these systems, even the newer open systems, place a strong emphasis on textual production and that assumption might no longer hold in an increasingly digital era. If a truly inclusive open system were to be created, it would be able to capture all kinds of research outputs such as digital outputs, practice-based research, event-based materials and more that did not have traditional text-based outputs.</li> <li>• Members of the committee welcomed the fact that the presentation had noted that there needed to be greater emphasis on educating publishers about the move towards open access. It was noted that academic publishing fell between huge commercial publishers making excessive profits and smaller publishers who did not appear to have much awareness of open access.</li> </ul> <p>DOR noted that the committee would continue to discuss this issue in the future.</p>
<p><b>B.2</b></p>	<p><b>Spotlight - School of Medicine</b> Sarah Doyle, Director of Research, School of Medicine</p> <p>Prof. Doyle provided an overview of research activity in the School of Medicine during which the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school was spread across four of Trinity's research institutes with the main offices in TBSI. Six hospitals were affiliated to the school for teaching but there was research activity at many other hospital locations. The school has three associated directors of research who all have specific responsibilities covering research integrity, funding etc. It was noted that Medicine and Surgery have two department heads as they are split across different hospital campuses. Clinical researchers affiliated to the school were essential for teaching students in hospitals, collaborating on research projects etc.</li> <li>• There were more than 800 researchers in the school, as well as 163 PhD candidates. 68% of the school's papers are open access with the school actively working to increase this. The school recently received a bronze Athena Swan award. A review of the school's research strategy was currently underway.</li> <li>• The school secured the first Wellcome Trust Career Development Award for many years in Ireland. The support of the school's Research Impact Officer,</li> </ul>

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	<p>Bridget Gavin, and Gill Marmelstein in the Research Development Office was acknowledged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to diversify the school’s funding sources was recognised and actions were underway to reduce the dependency on a limited number of funders. It was noted that the recently published Child Health report generated a lot of new research activity and identified new opportunities for early career researchers.</li> <li>• Similar challenges to other schools were noted with delays related to DPO approval for ethics applications being one of the more significant.</li> </ul> <p>In discussion with the committee the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There had been plans to develop an academic medical centre but the evolution of the HSE and dismantling of health boards meant that specific entity could not proceed.</li> <li>• The school’s research impact reports were all available online.</li> <li>• Procurement indicated that there may be HSE frameworks that could be made use of to access funding for equipment, infrastructure etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B.3</b></p>	<p><b>Update from the Dean of Research</b> Dean of Research</p> <p>Congratulations were noted to Prof. Ortwin Hess and Prof. Danny Kelly who would be elected to membership of the Royal Irish Academy.</p> <p><b>RS/19-20/1</b> The committee was advised that the QS subject rankings were due to be announced the next day. It was noted that Trinity had performed well but that the results were embargoed until publication. The committee was reminded that the QS subjects do not map on to Trinity’s school structure and should not be treated as a full reflection of a school’s performance.</p> <p>It was noted that eight Trinity research proposals secured funding under the recently announced 2023 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowships results. The eight awardees are drawn from across the Trinity research community — School of Chemistry, CONNECT, School of Physics, School of Histories and Humanities, Centre for Language and Communication Studies (CLCS), and School of Languages, Literatures &amp; Cultural Studies. The total amount awarded to Trinity was €1,629,235.</p> <p><b>RS/23-24/16</b> DOR advised the committee that the Research Boost programme was now open for applications. It was noted that this Research Boost Programme would make a total of €3 million available to support the purchase and upgrade of essential research equipment as well as more general research activity. The call was made up of two distinct streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stream 1 HEREG:</b> The total HEREG allocated to Trinity is €2,613,549. This funding is subject to specific terms and conditions required by the HEA.</li> <li>• <b>Stream 2 BOOST:</b> Trinity Research is making a further €400,000 available to support general research activities. This stream is not subject to the HEREG Terms and Conditions.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that as the aim of this call was to support as many applications and researchers as possible across as many disciplines as possible, there would be a cap on the amount that can be requested in each stream.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stream 1 HEREG:</b> Applications that request any amount up to €100,000 will be considered. Any application to Stream 1 that requests more than €100,000 will not be reviewed.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stream 2 BOOST:</b> Applications that request any amount up to €40,000 will be considered. Any application to Stream 2 that requests more than €40,000 will not be reviewed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B.4</b></p>	<p><b>Update on Trinity East</b> College Bursar</p> <p>The Bursar joined the meeting to provide an update on activity at Trinity East. During the presentation, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The driving rationale behind the project was to respond to the growth in student numbers and create a second city centre campus that would be unique and thrive in its own right. The campus would be treated as a living lab.</li> <li>• Financial sustainability was a significant challenge. It was noted that the overall finances of the university were difficult; income had never been as high, but expenditure was essentially the same so there was no strategic surplus that could be used to develop the campus. Existing debt on the site also meant that the option to borrow more for development was extremely unlikely. The project was increasingly looking to philanthropy and government support. It was also noted that once the campus was occupied it would have significant operating costs that would also need to be covered.</li> <li>• The project was being broken down into phases to make it more manageable. It was noted that Dublin City Council regulations required that the site meet certain density and capacity thresholds.</li> <li>• Portal should be ready for occupancy by March 2025. The event space would be available to the entire college community, not just those located at Trinity East.</li> <li>• A philanthropic donation from the Laidlaw Foundation meant that immediate work could begin to develop the research and innovation library on the site which would be an exciting addition to the campus and would support research across all disciplines.</li> <li>• Vacant units were being assessed in terms of how to enhance research activity on the site. It was noted that any research located on the site would need to be able to cover refurbishment and running costs.</li> <li>• It was noted that the Tower was a protected structure but there was significant potential to refurbish a number of floors to provide space for desk-based research. There would also be some mission-aligned industry leased space in the Tower to offset some of the cost of running the space. It was recognised that accessing space on the campus might be difficult for some areas that would not have ready access to funds.</li> <li>• IT infrastructure was not up to same level as the main campus but work was underway to improve this.</li> <li>• There was significant work to clean up the site. It was also noted that significant surveying needed to be done now that the buildings were not going to be demolished and rebuilt. Issues arising from the proximity to the water, potential impacts of climate change, flooding etc. all needed to be addressed.</li> <li>• The intention was to put design guidelines in place so that the campus would have some visual coherence when it is finally fully developed.</li> <li>• It was noted that by the time the green phase of activity was completed, approximately €100million would have been spent on the site.</li> </ul> <p>DOR congratulated the Bursar and the Librarian on the donation to begin work on the library space. The Librarian noted that it was a hugely symbolic development for the Library to be one of the first anchor tenants on the site as once there was a library</p>

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	<p>there was a campus. The Librarian noted that this would be our first 21<sup>st</sup> century library and represented an opportunity to be experimental in the philosophy of the library. It was also noted the existing library space was full so having new space would greatly improve matters for everyone. It was noted that there were massive amounts of digital resources through the UK e-legal deposit shared digital infrastructure but it was still necessary to go into a physical library space to access it. The Librarian also noted exciting opportunities to explore how best to use, manage and display all the digital content that Trinity itself was creating.</p> <p>In discussion with the committee it was noted that there were significant commercial opportunities in the imagining of an area for performing arts or creative arts similar to the MOLI. It was noted that there was some interest in developing the external spaces, and developing the relationship with the Lir and Creative Arts in that regard.</p> <p>The Bursar asked the committee to communicate to their schools that they were actively looking for research projects to be housed on the site.</p>
<b>Section C – Items for Noting</b>	
<b>C.1</b>	<p><b>Items for Noting</b></p> <p>No items for noting.</p>
<b>C.2</b>	<p><b>Items for future discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RS/23-24/10 DOR reminded the committee that a dedicated workshop on Research Culture would take place on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Committee members were advised that a folder of useful information on various research culture initiatives had been shared in advance of the workshop.</li> <li>• The committee was advised that Prof. Dave Lewis had been invited to present to the committee on the topic of AI in research.</li> </ul>
<b>C.3</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>No AOB.</p>