

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

**11:00, 3 December 2024
Board Room, Trinity Business School**

MINUTES

In attendance

Professor Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research (Chair)
Professor Brian Broderick (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Immo Warntjes (Associate Dean of Research)
Professor Catherine Welch, Director of Research, Trinity Business School
Professor Pádraic Whyte, Director of Research, School of English
Professor Mark Bell, Director of Research, School of Law
Professor Sonia Bishop, Director of Research, School of Psychology
Professor Sharyn O'Halloran, Director of Research, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Professor Benjamin Wold, Director of Research, School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies
Professor Mathias Senge, Director of Research, School of Chemistry
Professor Marco Ruffini, Director of Research, School of Computer Science and Statistics
Professor Michael Monaghan, Director of Research, School of Engineering
Professor Frank Wellmer, Director of Research, School of Genetics and Microbiology
Professor Andrei Parnachev, Director of Research, School of Mathematics
Professor Hal Duncan, Director of Research, School of Dental Science
Professor Sarah Doyle, Director of Research, School of Medicine
Professor Eilish Burke, Director of Research, School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Anne-Marie Healy, Director of Research, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Professor Kingston Mills, Director of TBSI
Professor Aideen Long, Director of Trinity Translational Medicine Institute
Professor Rhodri Cusack, Director of TCIN
Dr Michelle Olmstead, Chief Innovation and Enterprise Officer
Professor Martine Smith, Dean of Graduate Studies

In attendance:

Dr Fiona Smyth, Interim Head of Research Development, Research Development Office
Ms Elaine Sharkey, Projects Accounting Manager, Financial Services Division
Ms Doris Alexander, Associate Director - European Engagement, Trinity Research
Dr Gordon Elliott, Senior Patents & Licensing Manager, Trinity Innovation & Enterprise
Ms Audrey Crosbie, Innovation Manager, Trinity Innovation & Enterprise
Dr Geoff Bradley, Head of Academic Services and Operations, IT Services
Ms Helen Shenton, Librarian and College Archivist, Library
Dr Jennifer Daly, Research Strategy and Policy Manager, Trinity Research

Apologies

Prof. Padraic Fallon; Prof. Joseph Roche; Prof. James Hanrahan; Prof. Nathan Hill; Prof. Paula Mayock; Prof. Ed Lavelle; Prof. Yvonne Buckley; Prof. Eve Patten; Dr Rory Connolly; Dr Sally Smith; Susan Maguire; Michael Reilly

Section A – Items for Discussion and Approval	
A.1	Minutes Minutes for previous meeting in November were accepted without amendment.
A.2	Matters Arising from the Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• QS Contact Lists: DOR reminded the committee that an email was circulated after the last meeting with information about updating the contact lists for QS's academic and employer surveys. Committee was reminded that updated contacts should be returned by January 20th to be included in the overall list.
A.3	Library Life Pulse Survey (for discussion only) Helen Shenton, College Librarian and Siobhán Dunne, Deputy Head of Readers' Services

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	<p><i>Siobhán Dunne joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>SD presented the committee with an overview of the findings of the Library Life Pulse Survey. During the presentation the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey is conducted every two years. The majority of respondents to this iteration were taught students, from AHSS, two-thirds were female. • The top opportunity that emerged was the provision of supports and services for accessing online resources. It was noted that the Library had some concern that respondents felt they were not getting adequate support in this area. • There was a relatively even split in the responses regarding the preference for paper-based versus digital resources. It was noted that the Library was doing some analysis on the carbon footprint of e-books and online resources. • Respondents wanted Library staff to be trained in EDI. A signage project was underway to make the Library more accessible. It was also noted that an ambitious training programme had been implemented for Library staff. <p>During discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the committee noted that the introduction of the interim research collections study area had been a gamechanger for many schools. It was noted that the survey was conducted before the area had been opened so no formal feedback had been received in relation to it, but anecdotal feedback had been very positive to date. • The survey was disseminated via emails from the Secretary’s Office and then targeted social media posts. The Library also worked with the Students’ Union to ensure the inclusion of students’ feedback. • The survey feedback on enhanced supports for online resources would be factored into the development of the Laidlaw Digital Library at Trinity East.
<p>A.4</p>	<p>Trinity Research Centre proposal: TCD-TU Dublin Joint Centre for Sociology of Humans and Machines Prof. Taha Yasseri, School of Social Sciences and Philosophy</p> <p><i>Prof. Yasseri joined the meeting for this item.</i></p> <p>The proposal to establish the TCD-TU Dublin Joint Centre for Sociology of Humans and Machines as a Trinity Research Centre was circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. During the presentation, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workday had donated c. €2million to fund Prof. Yasseri’s chair and provide seed funding for research activities. Prof. Yasseri was also seconded to TUD as part of the arrangement, hence the proposal for a joint centre. This would also facilitate collaboration between Ireland’s oldest university and one of its newest. • The proposed centre would examine AI as a new “entity” in society, not just as a device or technology. The focus would be on human interaction with AI. • Community engagement formed an important component of the proposed activities with funding in place to appoint a community engagement officer. • Synergies with the activities of the ADAPT and INSIGHT centres were acknowledged while noting, however, that both had very different priorities to the activities of this proposal. <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the committee noted that the current governance structure was heavily dependent on Prof. Yasseri as an individual and were concerned that this dependence could pose a risk for the centre. The committee noted that many of those listed as affiliated with the proposed centre were not permanent staff and

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	<p>this was of concern to the committee. It was noted that the committee would like to see broader engagement with colleagues across disciplines. It was also noted that there were many colleagues doing work in similar areas where it could be beneficial to collaborate such as in the Trinity Business School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the committee noted the importance of the humanities and social sciences in terms of European funding. • There was some discussion of potential overlap with the activities of ADAPT and INSIGHT. It was clarified for members of the committee that Trinity research centres are distinct entities from other structures that might also use the ‘centre’ designation such as SFI centres and so could not be held to the same obligations as those external centres. • Members of the committee welcomed the commitment to public engagement, but noted that it was currently very focused on dissemination. It was suggested the co-creation and co-design could play more of a role in the centre’s activities. <p><i>Prof. Yasseri left the meeting.</i></p> <p>During further discussion the committee was reminded of the distinct differences between a Trinity Research Centre and other types of centres such as externally funded SFI centres. It was also noted that the Trinity Policy on Research Centres had an annual reporting requirement to monitor activities.</p> <p>The Dean of Research noted that the committee was broadly supportive of the proposal contingent on the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The centre needs to have broader engagement of academic staff across the university. As per the Policy on Trinity Research Centres, at a minimum the governance structure should have at least three members of the academic staff as members before the proposal can be approved. • Clarification on where the centre’s funding was housed. <p>ACTION: committee’s feedback to be sent to Prof. Yasseri with an invitation to submit a revised proposal for noting and approval at the next meeting.</p>
Section B - Items for Discussion Only	
<p>B.1</p>	<p>Update from the Dean of Research Prof. Sinéad Ryan, Dean of Research</p> <p>DOR noted congratulations to Trinity researchers for recent achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Cathal Walsh and Professor Matthew Chersich were awarded a prestigious Wellcome Trust Climate and Health Challenge Award for their Global Heat Attribution Project (GHAP) to track the impacts of climate change on maternal and child health. The project has been awarded €3.3M over a 3-year timeframe. • Prof. Seamus Martin, School of Genetics and Microbiology, was awarded the 2025 Royal Irish Academy Gold Medal. He was recognised for making a demonstrable and internationally recognised outstanding scholarly contribution in his field of Life and Medical Sciences. • Trinity researchers received awards for 6 projects out of a total 13 projects in the most recent HRB call, and €5.3 million out of a €12.5 million investment from the Health Research Board (HRB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr Alison Keogh, Discipline of Clinical Medicine (HS) ○ Dr Gina Leisching, Trinity Translational Medicine Institute (TTMI) (HS) ○ Dr Caoileann Murphy, Department of Physiology (HS)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr Nicky O'Boyle, Microbiology (STEM) ○ Dr Antoinette O'Connor, Discipline of Medical Gerontology (HS) ○ Dr Gráinne Sheill, Discipline of Physiotherapy (HS) ● Congratulations to all those recognised at the recent Trinity Innovation Awards which was hosted by Trinity Innovation & Enterprise. The Provost's Innovation Award was presented to Professor Jane Farrar, a transformative figure in the field of inherited ocular diseases, advancing innovation and commercialising research at Trinity College Dublin. ● Four Trinity researchers appeared on Clarivate's annual Highly Cited Researchers list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr Viet Pham, Assistant Professor, School of Computer Science. ○ Professor Valeria Nicolosi, School of Chemistry. ○ Professor Jonathan Coleman, Chemical Physics, School of Physics ○ Professor Luke O'Neill, School of Biochemistry and Immunology. <p>DOR updated the committee on the Living Research Excellence Strategy. DOR and colleagues from Trinity Research are visiting schools, TRIs, other units to feed into the review and update of the LRES. Thanks were noted to those colleagues who have already hosted a visit with further meetings planned for the new year.</p> <p>It was noted that additional HEREG funding had been allocated by DFHERIS for research equipment. DOR advised the committee that the terms and conditions were being reviewed, but a reserve list was maintained from the last Research Boost Call and it was hoped that some of the funding could be allocated to those proposals that could not be funded from the original allocation. DOR noted that a fuller update would be provided at the January meeting.</p> <p>DOR noted to the committee that additional FTE resource had been secured as part of the restructuring efforts in Trinity Research. It was noted that a full update would be provided at the February meeting of the committee.</p>
<p>B.2</p>	<p>Influences in the European (Research and Innovation) Environment Doris Alexander, Associate Director – European Engagement</p> <p>The committee was given a presentation on recent developments in the European Commission and the potential impacts on research and innovation activities. During the presentation the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most of the Commission's portfolios were new; there would now be a Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation. It was noted that research and innovation were shared competencies across the EU while education was a member-state competence. ● Strengthening the European Research Council had been flagged but the money to meet all the stated priorities was not available. It was noted that private investment would play a larger role in the next budget cycle, and that strengthening the university alliances was stated across multiple documents. ● A White Paper on the future of European defence was forthcoming. Dual use was once again coming to the fore as a topic for discussion. ● Notable proposals in the Draghi report included the establishment of an Innovation Agency similar to DARPA which would operate on an EU-wide basis to avoid the necessity of negotiating 27 different agreements. Other suggestions include an ERC for institutions. ● A new research policy agenda was being developed. The Commission would examine the various proposals to identify those to which they could commit

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	<p>resources. New areas for consideration included AI, ‘unleashing the full R&I potential of EU universities’, and research management excellence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that many member states were reducing budgets to their HEIs and looking to Europe to fill the gap. <p>In discussion with the committee, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was political will to maintain the ERC programme, but member states and interested parties still needed to lobby to ensure its protection. More needed to be done to make the link between research and innovation and industry clearer. Members of the committee noted strong support for the ERC programme. • There was currently no clarity in the system at a national level as to what increased dual use might mean for research at Trinity. It was noted that while there was as yet no confirmation that FP10 might become dual use, Trinity would need to be prepared in the event that it did. • Support was noted for a DARPA-style agency to administer research funding. It was noted that it was more agile and allowed for quicker responses to emerging opportunities. It was noted that the EU was often too slow to react to opportunities. • Members of the committee welcomed mentions of attracting talent, but it was noted that a crucial part of this was creating conditions for retention and reward of talent as well. • Concerns were expressed that a drift towards development and industry could happen at the expense of blue skies research.
Section C – Items for Noting	
C.1	<p>Items for Noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee noted and approved a request from Dr Gillian Frank to change the name of the TCD Centre for Gender and Women’s Studies to the TCD Centre for Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies.
C.2	<p>Items for future discussion</p> <p>The committee was advised that the following items would be discussed at upcoming meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bursar will present an update on Trinity East at the January meeting • An update from the Open Scholarship sub-group • DOR advised the committee that an item for discussion only on the More Than Our Rank would be brought to the January meeting. • HR would provide an update on the proposed new Researcher Recruitment process in the new year.
C.3	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the committee asked if there were any schemes for academics looking to relocate from the United States. DOR noted that it had been raised informally with College but there was not currently anything in place; it was suggested that it was something that should also be raised with funding agencies. • DOR updated the committee about ABOARD which is one of the funded NORF projects. DOR noted that the project team, of which Sally Smith is a co-lead, were conducting a survey around the openness to change in relation to Open Research practices, the Responsible Use of Research Metrics and Responsible Research Assessment. Committee was asked to respond to and share the survey with colleagues. • DOR noted that Associate Dean of Research Immo Warntjes was concluding his term as ADOR and that this would be his final committee meeting in that capacity.

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	<p>DOR thanked him personally for all his work and dedication to the role. DOR noted that he led the whole discussion around open scholarship and open access and also worked to establish the Postdoc Academy. DOR noted that these were two really important college wide initiatives that would do so much for researcher wellbeing. DOR thanked IW on behalf of the committee for all his work and wished him well for the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DOR wished everyone a peaceful and restful break, and thanked everyone for all their hard work and constructive and engaging discussions so far this year.
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