



RESEARCH COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

2018

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1. Mission

The mission of the Research Committee (RC) is to promote the research and scientific production of the Department. It is an advisory and instrumental body for the Director and the Department Board on topics related to scientific research.

2. Regulation and members

Regulation of RC is available on the Department website.

2018 Composition of the CR is the following:

Chair	Eugenio Scanziani
Vice-chair	Armando Negri
Secretary	Chiara Giudice
Members	Michele Mortarino Daniela Proverbio Federica Riva Daniele Vigo

Administrative staff: Chiara Soncini

The Commission, on the above composition, expired on 30 September 30 2018, at the end of the Director's term of office, according to regulations.

3. Meetings

Six meetings were held in 2018, with an average attendance of 83%.

Dates of meetings and related agenda are indicated in Annex I.

4. Activities

During the year the activities of the RC focused mainly on: (i) Department's scientific production and benchmarking; (ii) assignment of internal funds and (iii) assignment of awards.

4.1 Scientific production and Benchmarking

During the year, the Department's scientific performance was kept under observation, in particular concerning researchers "below threshold" (in terms of scientific productivity, according to Milan University criteria).

Moreover a benchmarking analysis was performed using SciVal platform (<https://www.scival.com/>) in order to compare Dimevet productivity (in terms of publications on the Scopus database) with national and international similar research groups and/or University, working on Veterinary Medicine. For this purpose a Dimevet group, including all researchers belonging to the department, was created on the platform. Although the program introduces some approximations, the results can be considered reliable. The analysis, (conducted in August-September 2018 and comprising data from 2016



to 2017), suggests that the Department has a good performance, quantitatively comparable to other large research centers in the veterinary field at national level. In particular, it is worth highlighting that the data suggest a better quality of productivity of Dimevet, as indicated by a higher number of publications in top rated journal. The latter conclusion applies also when comparing Dimevet to international institutions, even if, in this case, the number of publications from Dimevet is generally lower.

This work has been presented to the Department Board on 26 September 2018. (Annex II)

4.2 Assignment of internal funds (research funds allocated to the Department by the University of Milano)

– Internal funds: Linea 2

In May 2018, well in advance compared to previous years and allowing a tight time schedule for the assignment to specific projects, the central administration of the University indicated the total amount of the internal research funds allocated to each Department and the general criteria to follow for their distribution.

The Commission: (1) presented to the Department Board proposals on: (i) the distribution of the grant within the different type of actions indicated by the university, (ii) the rules for eligibility and (iii) evaluation criteria; (2) issued the calls based on the rules approved by the Department Board; (3) collected and evaluated the proposals and (4) issued a resolution proposal for final grants assignment, which was presented to the Director and the Department Board.

– Internal funds: call for new instrumentations

Upon request of the newly appointed Director, the Commission met even if its composition had formally expired, to provide support for a technical and scientific evaluation of the proposals received by the administrative office of the Department, following an invitation made to submit proposals for the purchase of new instruments based on multi-disciplinary research projects; 8 proposals were evaluated, first independently by all the members of the Commission and then collectively. A final report was elaborated and delivered to the Director.

4.3 Assignment of awards

The Commission organized and coordinated the competition for best publication of the year (2017). As usual three categories were proposed, considering different professional age and experience of researchers as well as considering first and/or last name. Following the publication of the rules for participation, 19 applications were received. During the July meeting, the RC evaluated the publications and selected the winners that were then presented during the September meeting of the Department Board.



4.4 *Other activities*

4.4.1 The Director's delegate for research Quality Assurance, prof Negri, with the help of Dr. Soncini, has kept monitoring that all newly enrolled research personnel (especially young researchers, i.e. Research Fellows and PhD students) obtain an Orcid ID and are familiar with the open access policy and the repository for publications (AIR) of the University. These issues are crucial for both internal and national evaluation analyses.

4.4.2 Dr Soncini has carried out a pilot project on the use of data bases for the search of funding opportunities. To this aim, free trials to two software (Pivot and Researcher Professional) were obtained and all the researchers were invited to test them. Although only a few researchers participated to the test, their opinion on the tools were enthusiastic. The Director received an official report on the outcome of this activity, according to which he proposed to the Departmental Board the purchase of an annual license of one of the tested databases in order to verify the impact on the Department more completely. The tool is also intended to reach one of the objectives, related to the research, indicated in the Department strategic plan (see below).

4.4.3 The activities concerning the Monitoring Plan on to the work of the Research Fellows of the Department, set up in 2017, continued also in 2018. Half-term reports were requested and an evaluation comment was prepared by members (usually 2) of the CR for each of them. Feedback was then given to the Research Fellows and their tutors.

4.4.4 The CR, and in particular the research AQ delegate (prof. Negri), the recently appointed delegate for Third Mission activities (prof. Mortarino) and the commission secretary (Dr. Soncini) were directly involved in the preparation of specific chapters of the Departmental Strategic Plan 2018-2020 (see below).

5. **Achievements**

During 2018 the following achievements were reached:

- Calls "Linea 2" and "New instrumentation" (internal grants) were managed and assigned in due time
- Awards for best year publications were assigned
- A report on the scientific production of 4 Research Fellows with an expiring contract was prepared for the director
- An update on the department scientific production and benchmarking data was presented at the Department Board

6. **Future plans**

During fall 2018 the Department head, together with the departmental managing bodies, wrote and delivered to the central office of the University the first Departmental Strategic Plan for 2018-2020. In the document, 3 strategic objectives concerning research were indicated: (i) to adopt specific actions supporting the open science policy of the university; (ii) to improve research quality and, in particular, to prepare the department to the next national research performance evaluation (VQR, most likely comprising 2015-2018), even if



the criteria that will be applied for evaluation have not be communicated yet by the Italian Ministry of the University (MIUR); (iii) to set up activities of research planning and management in order to incentivize and support the researchers during grants searching, writing and managing.

The primary commitment of the Commission for the future is, therefore, to give to the Director and the department researchers the maximum support for the achievement of the objectives indicated above.

Annexes

Annex I – Meetings days and agenda

Annex II – Department scientific production and benchmarking analysis September 2018
Official presentation