



**National Student
Engagement Programme**

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta
na Mac Léinn

National Student Engagement Network

Event Report – May 2023



nstep@usi.ie



www.studentengagement.ie



[@NStEP.ie](https://twitter.com/NStEP.ie)

National Student Network Event

9th May 2023

Many thanks to all the speakers, chairpersons, contributors and attendees for making the National Student Engagement Network such a successful day!

A special word of thanks to the team at Dublin City University and DCU Students' Union for their support with organising and hosting the event.

The focus of the event was on upcoming projects exploring 'Student Engagement, Belonging and Wellbeing' and 'Governance and Student Representation', updates on some of the submissions on our Case Study Hub and of course, celebrating the recipients of our Student Engagement Recognition Awards!



National Student Network Event

Agenda



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9th May 2023

Dublin City University, U-Building

Time	Session		
10.00 am – 10.30 am	Registration (Tea & Coffee)		
10.30 am – 11.00 am	Welcome and NStEP Update		
11.00 am – 1.00 pm	NStEP Case Study Hub Highlight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rob Lowney, DCU – Student Partnership in Assessment • Lesley Cotter, MTU – TIPToP Conference • Yvonne Kavanagh, SETU Carlow – P2P Support – Students Helping Students • Lindsay Dowling, Technological University Dublin – Diversifying the Curriculum, Building MultiStories 		
1.00 pm – 1.40 pm	Lunch		
Parallel Sessions			
1.40 pm – 2.30 pm	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Staff Session: Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Belonging Brainstorm</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Student Rep/Student Union Session: Student Governance Module Brainstorm</td> </tr> </table>	Staff Session: Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Belonging Brainstorm	Student Rep/Student Union Session: Student Governance Module Brainstorm
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2.30 pm – 3.00 pm	Student Engagement Recognition Awards (SERA)		
Close			



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National Student Engagement Programme

Key Takeaways

Contributor Perspective

I was delighted to be asked by NStEP to present our case study from the Case Study Hub at the recent National Student Engagement Network event. Four of the case studies from the Hub were presented and these highlighted the diverse initiatives that institutions are undertaking to promote student engagement and partnership.

The event afforded the opportunity to showcase our work on student partnership which involves working closely with our students to develop a scientific conference. It was good to have feedback from others on our case study and interest in developing similar projects. It was great to see attendees from a variety of roles including students, academic staff, administration, and support staff (including library and digital media) showing the wide-ranging commitment to student engagement.

The networking event was well organised and finished with group discussions contributing to some of the focus areas of NStEP. These sessions sparked some lively conversation, it will be interesting to see in the future how these projects develop and are actioned.

Dr. Lesley Cotter
Programme Director and Lecturer of
Biological Sciences, Munster
Technological University



Key Takeaways

Attendee Perspective

NStEP's National Student Engagement Network event was an engaging day that highlighted the large variety of student engagement initiatives being undertaken in Irish higher education. The presence of both staff and students from different institutions allowed for interesting conversations to develop and for professional networks to expand.

Student engagement may typically be associated with staff and student union members, but the diversity of the Student Engagement Network highlighted how this approach involves many more departments. At the Student Engagement Network, attendants heard not only from the traditional academic staff, but from librarians and student singers as well!



Judith Veld
NStEP Student Trainer 22/23

Cont.

Key Takeaways

Attendee Perspective

The morning program consisted of interesting talks from professionals in different areas of student engagement. Rob Lowney presented how making students partners in decision-making around assessment leads to better assessment results, more motivated students, and less plagiarizing. This highlights how student engagement can lead to significant improvement even in areas traditionally conceptualized as top-down imposed activities.

Another example of student-professor partnership was provided by Lesley Cotter and the TIPTOP conference organized by students, guided by professors. Framed as professional development, this conference added a practical component to the curriculum that saw high student engagement and allowed students to build their professional network and skills.

In addition to academic engagement, the presentation of Peer to Peer support by Yvonne Kavanagh, Mary Boylan, and Alannah Somers showed the possibilities for increasing social engagement. This student-led peer to peer mentoring program was successful in reaching and engaging a large number of students and was especially important for engaging shy students.

The last presentation by Lindsay Dowling showed how optimal student engagement requires institutions to diversify their library collections. Doing so may increase engagement of those students struggling to engage with the formats and voices that are overrepresented in traditional academic sources.

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Key Takeaways

Attendee Perspective

The afternoon program was a direct implementation of recommendations made during the morning program and saw the attendants break up in staff and student plenary sessions. During the student sessions the floor was opened to students for them to raise challenges faced by class reps to help NStEP tailor its training to these challenges.

The students indicated that as a new class rep, the role may be overwhelming and its importance hard to grasp. Class reps form a link between students and staff, but amidst the rules of the academic hierarchy, new reps can struggle to see the bigger picture and their potential role in it.

This led into an interesting feedback session on the contents of the new NStEP module on governance, which was created to help class reps navigate this confusing part of the institution. The new module was well-received and the discussion surrounding governance and the bigger picture was stimulating and productive.

At the end of the event, students who actively participated in NStEP's training program to increase student engagement were celebrated with the SERA awards. It was heart-warming to see students' hard work being rewarded. The award-ceremony was the perfect finish to a fun-filled day. The multifaceted program of the Student Engagement Network event made it an enjoyable yet educational day. Attendees left feeling inspired, with new ideas for non-traditional avenues of increasing student engagement!

Final Notes

Again, NStEP would like to extend a huge thank you to DCU and DCUSU, all the speakers, attendees and our student trainers for making the National Student Engagement Network such a successful day! Special thanks to Conor McCabe Photography.

All presentations and photos can be viewed on the NStEP website:

<https://studentengagement.ie/national-student-engagement-network-may-2023/>

