



**National Student
Engagement Programme**
Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta
na Mac Léinn

Student Engagement, Belonging and Wellbeing Project Update

National Student Engagement Network
29th November 2023

RCSI



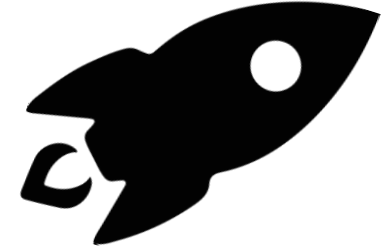
Introduction to the Project

Foundation

Funded by the Department of Health via HEA Healthy Campus Initiative for an 18-month project housed with NStEP

Aims

To explore how the Healthy Campus Framework together with academic programme student-staff partnerships can support engagement in teaching and learning, foster a sense of belonging, and promote wellbeing in Higher Education settings

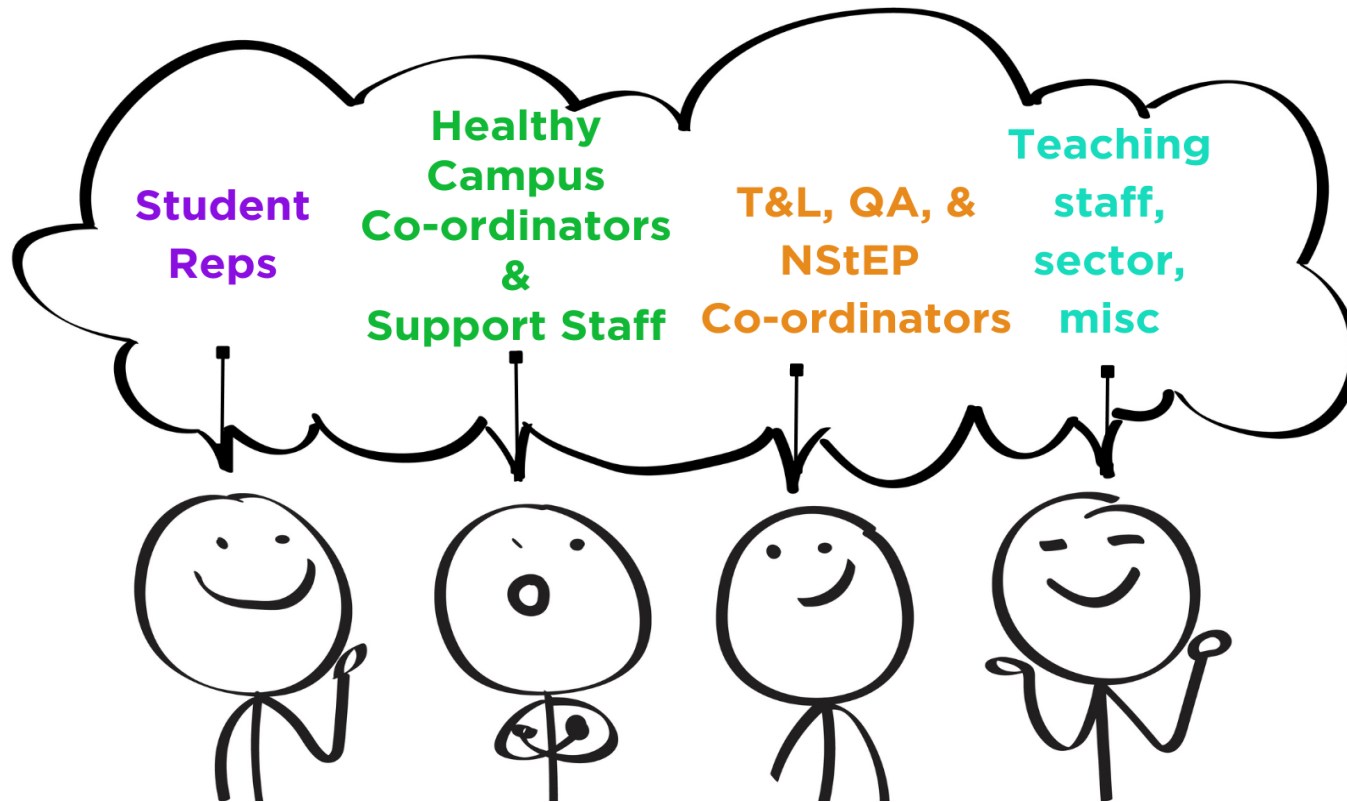


Mission Statement

Infuse Student Partnership into the implementations of the Healthy Campus and other relevant frameworks, using authentic student engagement and partnership practices



Initial Consultations



Four consultations took place online in August online with key stakeholders in the area of Health, Wellbeing and Student partnership

Introduction to the project

Scoping Exercise

- Identifying gaps in HEI's and national resources
- Staff & Student varying needs
- What are we doing well, where we need to improve

Blue Sky Exercise

- Ultimate outcomes for the project

Common threads



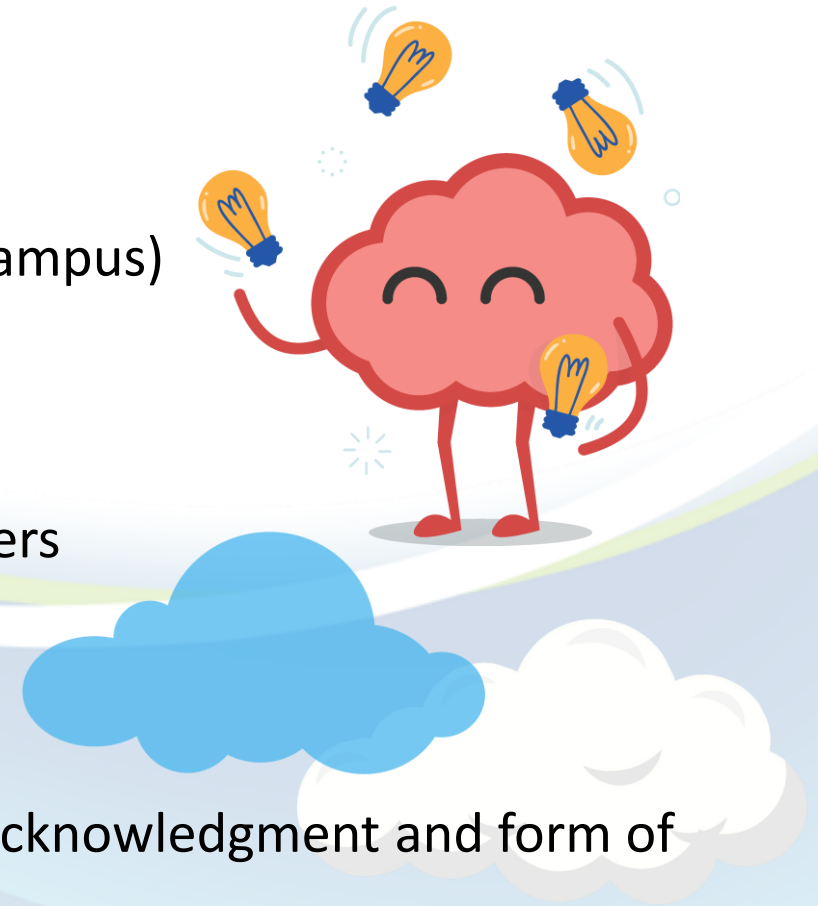
Consultation findings

Scoping Exercise

- Multiple resources leading to information overload
- Lack of access to tangible resources (e.g. Psychiatrist on every campus)
- External stressors affecting students
- Disengagement post pandemic
- Lack of Resilience and empowerment among students
- Students and staff feel loss of identity and belonging with Mergers
- Lack of time to dedicate to Healthy Campus

Blue Sky Exercise

- National training framework for all HEI staff and students with acknowledgment and form of accreditation
- Integrating the belonging & well-being resources into programme development & curriculum
- Health and Wellbeing becoming front and centre of all strategic plans.
- Every student having access to all the resources they need



Research surrounding Belonging so far

- Very little in Irish context
- Research is mostly from the USA and Australia
- Sense of Belonging begins at classroom level
- Thoughtful consideration to orientation programmes improves self-efficacy and belonging
- Group work and diversity of teaching and learning styles has a positive impact
- Authentic student engagement improved sense of belonging
- Strong sense of belonging contributes to:
 - Higher levels of attrition
 - Increased academic success
 - Improved mental health



NStEP QA Reviewers Consultation Day

Split sessions into different areas

➤ Review of our previous consultations

➤ Wellbeing

- Current Structures that exist
- What positive initiatives exist

➤ Belonging

- How does belonging impede/enhance the Student Learning Experience

➤ Student Engagement

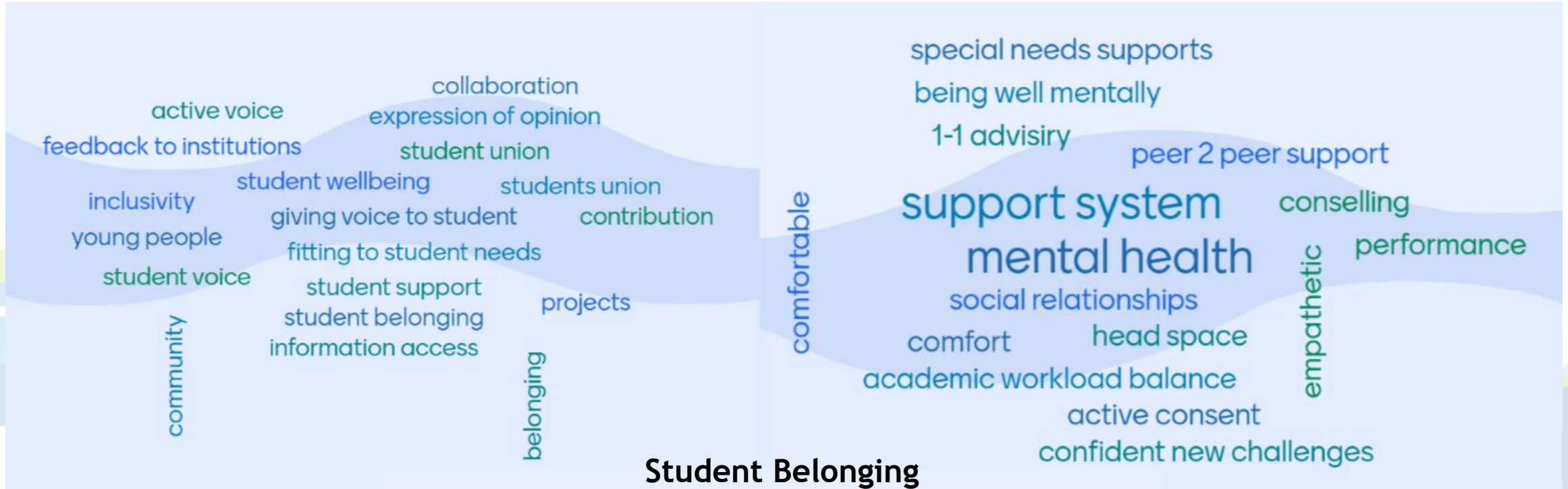
- How they would engage with staff
- Initiatives they would bring to their Student Learning Experience to improve their Wellbeing and Belonging



Student Engagement

Common Themes

Student Wellbeing



Student Belonging



Review of Initial Consultations

Scoping

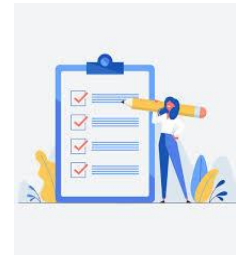
- People still trapped in a feeling of disconnect Post-Covid
- Lack of resilience and interpersonal skills
- Agreed in loss of identity and sense of pride with mergers
- Teaching styles pre-covid may no longer suit students in a post-covid world
- Lack of knowledge/awareness of Frameworks

Blue Sky

- Waiting times for physical resources such as counselling leads to snowballing, lack of early intervention
- Virtual access to services may alleviate pressure
- Curriculum embedment may be difficult, mandatory sessions or short pieces during key weeks may work better



Initial Comments from Students



- Uncertainty on expectations and how to engage in an academic world
- Orientation and consistency for all years, feel less included in subsequent years
- Lack of belonging more prevalent in Postgraduate students
- Students are asked but feel opinions may not be implemented -feedback
- Opportunities to engage often only available through SU initiatives and Welfare crews

"Incumbent on us as students and staff that we work together to give people the tools to work with, we need confident professionals and feelings of community and support, and knowing they have that support they will become more efficient."



Next Steps

