



**National Student
Engagement Programme**

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta
na Mac Léinn

National Student Engagement Network

Event Report – 28th November 2024



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studentengagement.ie



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National Student Network Event

28th November 2024

Many thanks to all the speakers, contributors and attendees for making our National Student Engagement Network event of 2024 such a successful day! A special word of thanks to the team at the National College of Ireland and NCI Students' Union for their support with organising and hosting the event.

The theme of the event was 'Engage, Empower, Elevate: Transforming the Student Experience'. Attendees heard from speakers on the importance of student-led change and student leadership initiatives, the need for diverse perspectives in shaping inclusive educational environments, how student engagement has changed post-pandemic and the need to adapt engagement strategies to meet the needs of students in a rapidly changing world, and student mental health and wellbeing.

Speakers at the event included staff and students sharing their work on student-staff partnership projects on the topics of student engagement, wellbeing and belonging, student success, updates on NStEP's Student Training Programme for this academic year so far, and of course our keynote speaker, Rebecca Roper.

All presentations and photos can be viewed on the [NStEP website](#).

National Student Network Event

Event Programme



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28th November 2024

National College of Ireland



National
College of
Ireland

Time	Session
10.00 am – 10.30 am	Registration, Refreshments and Networking
10.30 am – 11.00 am	Welcome and NSTEP Update
11.00 am – 11.20 am	Linda O'Sullivan, SUCCCEED, Munster Technological University, Cork
11.20 am – 11.35 pm	Fiona Mullins, Student Engagement Associates, Munster Technological University, Kerry
11.35 pm – 11.45 am	Refreshments and Networking
11.45 am – 12.30 pm	Keynote Speaker: Rebecca Roper, Student Success Project, Higher Education Authority
12.30 pm – 1.30pm	Lunch
1.30 pm – 2.15 pm	Project Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caroline Mahon, Student Wellbeing Project, Higher Education Authority • Sarah Hughes, Mental Health, Union of Students of Ireland • Sinead Lynch, Student Voices: Peer Support In Module Selection for Online Education Students, Dublin City University
2.15 pm – 2.45 pm	Dr Lorraine Tansey, StudentVolunteer.ie
2.50 pm – 3.00 pm	Closing Remarks and Photographs



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Key Takeaways

Keynote Speaker Perspective

I was honoured to be invited to speak at this networking event. NStEP's commitment to ensuring students as partners, enabling student engagement, amplifying the student voice throughout the landscape of higher education is well established. It is always exciting to discuss student success with a group of like-minded people, and I hope they enjoyed the experience as much as I did.

Student success is at the heart of higher education in Ireland. There is a statutory requirement for all Irish higher education institutions to promote Student Success at all levels of the HEI (HEA, 2022, Technological Universities Act 2018, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science [amendment], 2021, Universities Act 1997). An [understanding of student success](#) issued by the National Forum encompasses the multi-faceted nature of the term.

Metrics like access, progression, academic achievement, completion, graduate employment and further education give quantitative results but may not measure the nuances of student success. Considerations of student well-being, self-efficacy, confidence, sense of belonging, agency, mattering, purpose, identity, global citizenship and financial well-being should all be included in evaluating student success.

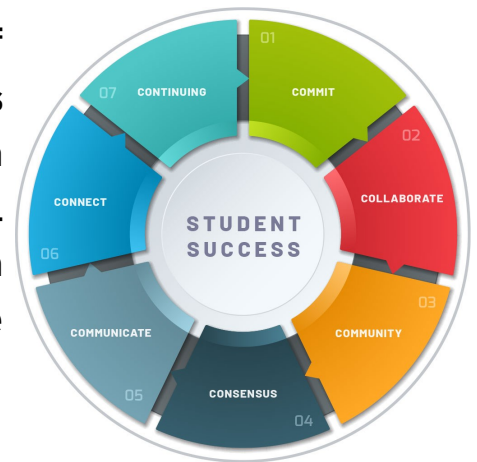
During the session we explored some of these ideas, set against the background of change in our world, pre and post COVID. Utilising statistics from StudentSurvey.ie, the number of students who seriously consider leaving higher education is still high, with 35% in first year and 44.7% in final year of their undergraduate education. During COVID, crucial student engagement indicators of Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment were all significantly affected. This emphasises the importance of student success and the need for additional research and action to be focused in the area.

Cont.

Key Takeaways

Keynote Speaker Perspective

To support student success, we reviewed some of the excellent tools currently available on the HEA's website; specifically, the [7 C's](#) and the Persona Generator. With the generator, we broke into small groups and explored common scenarios from both the learner and staff viewpoint, sharing back the resources and strategies suggested.



Finally, the commitment and warm hospitality from both Niamh, Rachael and the NStEP team created a dynamic event with strong engagement from the audience. It was a very valuable event, and I was delighted to be able to contribute. Thank you for including me. Onward!

Rebecca Roper
Teaching and Learning Policy Advisor for
Student Success
Higher Education Authority



Key Takeaways

Speaker Perspective

Student Volunteer Ireland (StudentVolunteer.ie) is committed to centring the student voice in our governance and decision making. The NStEP National Student Engagement Network event is pivotal for us to share how we operationalise student voice but also learn from our communities of practice across Irish HEIs.

Establishing a Student Advisory Panel

Student Volunteer Ireland believes student voice is important for the growth of student volunteering across Ireland and a vehicle to achieve our vision of every student having the opportunity to make an impact in community. Our first ever Student Advisory Panel at SVI will ensure that students at UCD, TU Dublin, UCC, UL, and University of Galway have a direct impact on the growth and development of Student Volunteer Ireland (StudentVolunteer.ie).

SVI are thrilled to partner with NStEP in developing training for our Student Advisory Panel to ensure that students not only have a seat at the decision-making table but are also confident in bringing their ideas. Likewise, the training programme supports staff at SVI to think critically about how well we listen, position and action student leadership. NStEP are vastly experienced in enabling student voice, they are the experts in guiding higher education to meaningfully listen to the student experience.

Empowerment through Training

Funding for the Student Advisory Panel is provided by the Irish Youth Foundation. SVI successfully achieved this funding through research supported by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The funding directly commissions the NStEP workshop series that will focus on enabling students to explore the “ladder of citizen participation” theory and the methods for preparing for board participation and providing feedback as a representative. Workshop two focuses on representing fellow students in decision-making especially representing diversity, and minority student experiences. Showcasing our partnership with NStEP is important as it demonstrates the value we place on building students' skills.

Cont.

Key Takeaways

Speaker Perspective

Empowerment through Action

Across our campuses students are engaged in student welfare, educational supports, recreational friendship activities, environmental campaigns and technology to mention a few. Student member of the Student Advisory Panel, Faith Omotayo, co-presented bringing her experiences of being an active student volunteer at TU Dublin to the event attendees. The whole room really felt the power that one empowered student volunteer can bring their university community. Student engagement is an important aspect to student success and wellbeing, and the many acts of volunteerism by students deserve to be recognised and supported. SVI shared our student volunteer health-check, a self assessment framework, through our national Digital Badge supported at opencourses.ie.

Niamh and Rachael are a dynamic duo that crafted a significant day for higher education specialists to influence and understand the policy and practice landscape. Student Volunteer Ireland had the opportunity to learn more about HEA initiatives and reflect on how we can be a vital contributor to the overall student success strategy through championing student engagement that is volunteer healthy!

Dr. Lorraine Tansey
Programme Manager
Student Volunteer Ireland
(StudentVolunteer.ie)



Key Takeaways

Student Speaker Perspective

Participating in the National Student Engagement Network event as part of the Student Volunteer Ireland panel was an incredible experience to advocate for the power of student volunteering. It was a chance to share how volunteering not only enhances student engagement in campus life but also plays a critical role in promoting diversity, particularly in STEM fields.

I shared my personal journey, emphasizing the invaluable skills I've gained, like leadership and communication, while underscoring how volunteering fosters a sense of belonging and teamwork. The panel also offered a unique perspective—I was able to discuss the importance of balancing academics with volunteering and highlight how even small contributions can create meaningful impact.

Engaging in discussions with members of staff from different universities about increasing student participation gave me valuable insights into their perspectives, and I provided input on strategies that truly resonate with students, bridging the gap between institutional goals and student experiences.

Faith Omotayo

BSc. in Computer Science

Technological University Dublin

Student Advisory Panel Member at
Student Volunteer Ireland
(studentvolunteer.ie)



Key Takeaways

Speaker Perspective

I was delighted to present on MTU's SUCCEED Programme at NStEP's National Student Engagement Network event on November 28th, 2024. My presentation focused on how Munster Technological University (MTU) is transforming the student voice into actionable insights to drive institutional improvements. The session provided an opportunity to share MTU's innovative approach to utilising StudentSurvey.ie data through standardised reporting and active engagement with academic units, enabling us to amplify the student voice in meaningful ways.

The feedback we received was incredibly encouraging, particularly from participants representing the Higher Education Authority, who expressed keen interest in how SUCCEED's model could inform sectoral practices. Their response reinforced the relevance and transferability of the SUCCEED framework to other higher education institutions, underscoring its potential as a replicable model for enhancing student engagement.

The theme of the event - Engage, Empower, Elevate: Transforming the Student Experience - resonated deeply with SUCCEED's core principles. Our presentation emphasised how SUCCEED is facilitating a cultural shift at MTU by making student feedback available to inform decision-making processes. This approach has not only enhanced transparency but also fostered stronger partnerships between students and staff, aligning with MTU's strategic goals.

I'm sincerely grateful to NStEP for providing such a dynamic platform to showcase SUCCEED and to learn from the impactful initiatives presented by fellow attendees. Events like these remind us of the collective potential to create transformative educational experiences through collaboration and shared learning.

Linda O'Sullivan
Academic Project Lead, Teaching &
Learning Unit
Munster Technological University



Key Takeaways

Student Perspective

The National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) held its latest network event at the National College of Ireland, bringing together students and staff from across higher education. Supported by the HEA, QQI, and USI, the event explored how to transform the student experience through collaboration and innovation.

The day's theme, "Engage, Empower, Elevate: Transforming the Student Experience," encouraged attendees to think deeply about student-led change, inclusive education, and enhancing student success. Speakers delivered inspiring and insightful presentations highlighting key points such as the need for diverse perspectives to shape inclusive educational environments, prioritising student mental health and wellbeing, and the power of student leadership in driving meaningful changes in higher education institutions.

Attendees had a chance to network and foster connections and collaborations and left with useful insights about student-staff partnership.

NStEP created an event that brought together diverse voices from across the education sector, and this event successfully drove conversations and focus on collective efforts to create inclusive and supporting learning environments and also remained committed to ensuring that student engagement and collaboration are promoted.

Lenka Vrančíkova
MBS in Entrepreneurship and Marketing
Dundalk Institute of Technology

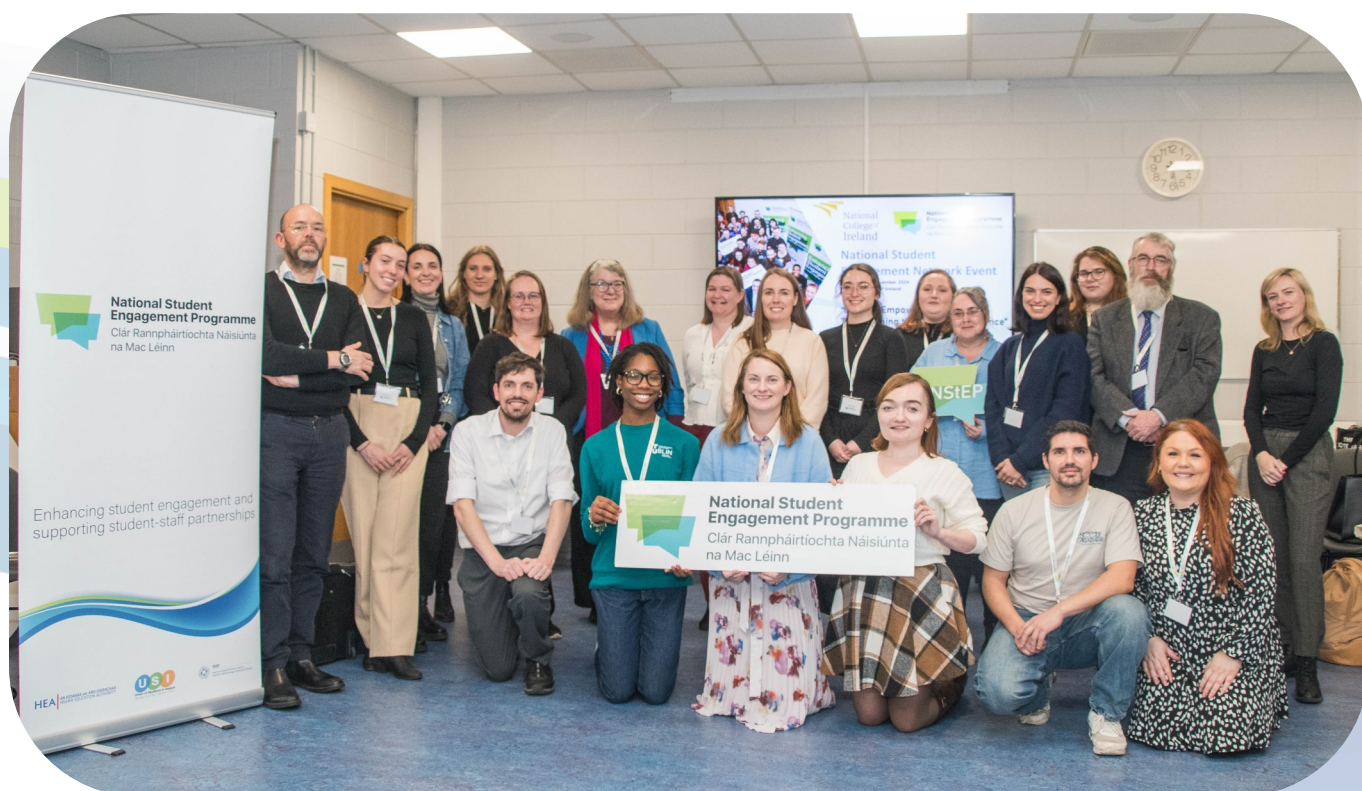
NStEP Student Trainer
NStEP Student Quality Assurance
Reviewer



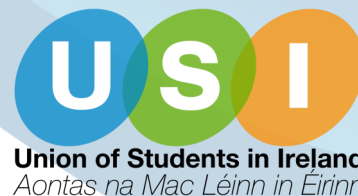
All presentations and photos from the event can be viewed [here](#) on the NStEP website.

Again thank you to all our speakers, attendees, and teams from NCI and NCISU for making our National Student Engagement Network event a success.

We hope to see you at our next event!



The National Student Engagement Programme is a partnership programme of



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