



**National Student
Engagement Programme**

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta
na Mac Léinn

National Student Engagement Network

Event Report — 9th May 2025



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National Student Network Event

9th May 2025

Many thanks to all the speakers, contributors and attendees for making our recent National Student Engagement Network such a successful day! A special word of thanks to Maynooth University, Maynooth Students' Union, and Gemma Middleton for their support with organising and hosting the event.

The theme of the event was “From Participation to Partnership: Enhancing Student Engagement in Higher Education”. Attendees heard from speakers on the importance of engaging students as co-creators and decision-makers in academic and institutional planning, developing engagement strategies that are sustainable and adaptable over time, bridging the gap between students and staff through collaborative projects and mutual learning, and ensuring that all students, especially those from marginalised groups, have opportunities to influence their educational experience.

Speakers at the event included staff and students sharing their work on various student-staff partnership projects on the topics of student engagement, wellbeing and belonging, student success, updates on NStEP's Student Training Programme and Class Rep Census Project for this academic year.

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



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

National Student Engagement Network
7th May 2025
Maynooth University



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

National Student Network Event

Event Programme

Time	Session
10.00 am – 10.30 am	Registration, Refreshments and Networking
10.30 am – 10.50 am	Welcome, NSTEP Update and Census Project
10.50 am – 11.10 am	From Agenda Item to Impact: Embedding Staff-Student and Student-Student Engagement Across a Faculty Alex Candon, DCU
11.10 am – 11.30 am	ReFridge: From Food Relief to Co-Creation – A Student-Led Social Enterprise Driving Partnership and Change Bohdan Yeremienko, TU Dublin
11.30 am – 11.50 am	Upskill Initiatives at MU: Student Success Micro Internship Programme & The SPUR Supporter Programme Máire Buckley, Rebecca Boyle and Seamus O'Neill, Maynooth University
11.50 am – 12.00 pm	Keeping Student Engagement Opportunities Relevant and Scalable Zuzana O'Sullivan, MTU
12.00 pm – 12.30 pm	Panel Discussion with Students with Disabilities AHEAD/ USI Students with Disabilities Advisory Group 2025
12.30 pm – 1.30pm	Lunch and Networking
1.30 pm – 1.50 pm	Student Volunteer Student Advisory Panel Faith Holmes, Tommy Burke and Uliana Vasiliuk, StudentVolunteer.ie
1.50 pm – 2.00 pm	Engaging Postgraduate Students Sarah Fitzpatrick, USI
2.00 pm – 2.15 pm	Voices at the Table: A Partnership Approach to Institutional Project Planning Eddie Corr, Maynooth University
2.15 pm – 2.35pm	Autism Summer Programme Katie Quinn, AsIAM and Fiona Earley, DCU
2.35 pm – 3.00 pm	NSTEP Strategy Discussion and Review
3.00 pm	Closing Remarks and Photographs



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National Student Engagement Programme



National Student Engagement Programme (NSTeP)

Key Takeaways

Student Speaker Perspective

It was a privilege to present “From Agenda Item to Impact” at the NStEP National Student Engagement Network event in Maynooth University. My session focused on how student leadership can transform engagement culture at faculty level by embedding student voice as a recurring, actionable agenda item across schools.

This work emerged in response to post-pandemic engagement data—internal feedback scores revealed a breakdown in engagement, especially among placement-heavy and commuter students. As Student Faculty Representative for the Faculty of Science and Health at DCU, I led a cross-faculty proposal to institutionalise student engagement on school teaching meeting agendas. The proposal was formally adopted across seven schools and set out a series of targeted recommendations to improve engagement.

While I piloted a faculty-wide inter-year coffee morning during Week 3, the proposal also recommended redesigned consultation practices to improve accessibility and the introduction of a structured peer mentorship system using a long-term ‘grandparent’ model. One of the most impactful steps was a focused consultation with nursing students—the Nurses’ Focus Group—on 25-week placements, which gave voice to those often excluded from typical engagement channels.

Presenting this journey at the NStEP event and hearing from so many others doing transformative work across institutions was both energising and affirming. The feedback from attendees—staff and students alike—reinforced the importance of simple but meaningful interventions and of embedding engagement into governance structures, not just projects.

Cont.

Key Takeaways

Student Speaker Perspective

The theme “From Participation to Partnership” strongly resonated with my work, and it was inspiring to be part of a collective effort to reimagine what inclusive student-staff partnership can look like.

A huge thanks to the NStEP team and Maynooth University for hosting such a vibrant and reflective event.

Alex Candon
Faculty Student Representative,
Dublin City University

NStEP Student Quality Assurance
Reviewer



Key Takeaways

Student Speaker Perspective

Attending and speaking at the NStEP event “From Participation to Partnership” at Maynooth University was an incredibly valuable and inspiring experience. As a student working on a social impact project like ReFridge, it was refreshing to be in a space that truly prioritised student voices, not only in theory but in practice.

Presenting at the event was both an honour and a learning moment. Sharing our journey with ReFridge helped me realise how much impact students can make when given the trust and support to lead.

The feedback and encouragement we received from attendees, particularly staff members, confirmed that there’s real interest in building more inclusive and student-driven systems in higher education.

One of the highlights of the day was hearing from other students who are also leading meaningful projects, whether in accessibility, wellbeing, or academic engagement. It was a reminder that student partnership is a variety of approaches that adapt to the needs of each campus and community.

Bohdan Yeriemienko
Student, TU Dublin
Co-Founder, ReFridge



Key Takeaways

Attendee Perspective

It was a real pleasure to attend NStEP's most recent network event at Maynooth University on what proved to be a beautifully sunny day in May. As always, the event brought together a thoughtful, passionate group of students and staff committed to advancing student engagement and partnership across Irish higher education.

The theme "From Participation to Partnership" was powerfully reflected in the day's programme. Two sessions in particular stood out for me. First, "From Agenda Item to Impact" delivered by Alex Candon (DCU). Alex offered a clear and honest account of what it takes to rebuild engagement culture post-pandemic. His experience as Faculty Rep and involvement in quality assurance demonstrated how student leadership, when supported, can drive meaningful change.

The second standout was "Voices at the Table" from Eddie Corr and Emma McDermott (Maynooth University). Eddie's energy and skill as a presenter were matched by a deep understanding of student success and belonging. Together with Emma's perspective from the frontline of student support, they reminded us of the importance of equipping students to learn how to navigate university, not just academically, but as full members of the community.

What I valued most about the day was the balance of practical insight and big-picture thinking. The conversations were grounded, honest, and full of ideas I'll be bringing back to Marino Institute of Education. My thanks to Niamh and Rachael from the NStEP team for coordinating such a rich and engaging event.

Events like this reaffirm that true student engagement goes far beyond consultation. It's about partnership, shared responsibility, and a willingness to co-create better learning environments for all.

Colum Cronin
Student Engagement Officer
Marino Institute of Education



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 Maynooth University and MSU 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

