Context: *due to room bookings issues ECSA had to break the class rep meetings into three rooms on 3 different floors across the college (including the boardroom) to facilitate & deliver class rep conference – each room was at maximum capacity –* 90 Class Reps in total

Question 1. *Have you or any of your classmates had an issue at College that has made you/them consider dropping out? If so, what was the issue? If not, what do you think is the biggest reason for students struggling to stay on their course?*

1. **Support for Mental Health**
   a. No counsellors or staff capable of dealing with immediate and long term problems – feeling of being palmed off
   b. Bounced from department to department – no ownership or guidance on how to proceed
   c. Left in limbo after declaring they need support – waiting and waiting, getting increasingly stressed not knowing what to expect

2. **Funding**
   a. Complicated funding procedure
   b. No feedback on application progression
   c. Application process halts every time there is missing info they don't check entire application then say you need X amount of documents – adds weeks onto the process
   d. Childcare system is difficult to use - increased difficulties from nurseries taking college students due to past issues with processing
   e. Having any savings impact your funding - cycle that you need to be broke before you can ask for help even if its impending poverty.

3. **Student support resource stretched**
   a. Long queues at peak times – some students queue for ages and all they want is to pick up a form or hand something in
   b. Staff seem stressed & agitated
   c. Some front of house staff do not seem sympathetic or interested in student concerns – incredibly demotivating
   d. Students have to chase cases but are always told 'we will be in touch in a few days' but weeks pass.

4. **Course expectations**
   a. Course shape & delivery doesn't reflect how it was sold to them – in 1 room, 20 out of 25 Reps believed this to be the case about their course
   b. Marketing and Communications around what a course entails need to be more honest and clear – practical/theory balance, requirement for a placement, pathways to next level or University, etc.

5. **Student progression & integration**
   a. Feel there is a disparity managing mixed ability groups in a classroom environment
   b. Lack of community within the college

c. No opportunities to socialise and feel PART of the college
   d. Students feel quite isolated and like they don't belong even within classes
   e. College doesn't care about them as individuals

6. **Study materials**
   a. Barrier to participate for non-funded & funded students
   b. Students on bursary still paying eye watering money for kits, trips, which are MANDATORY parts of the course – this is a hidden cost, not disclosed upfront

7. **Organisation**
   a. The administration and course organisation is all over the place
   b. Finding out about enrolment days before a course starts
   c. Finding information in one place is really difficult
   d. Staff did not seem prepared for the start of term - support staff & teaching teams
   e. Not enough clear communications from staff to students around changes and what needs to happen next
   f. Assessment dates aren't planned or communicated to students in advance to allow them to plan their workload
   g. Feels like everyone is working in isolation within departments and classes
   h. Class room organisation is incredibly poor, huge gaps in timetable, rooms not fit for purpose
   i. Class cover still an issue – either not in place or not communicated, people waste hours travelling to college only to be told class was cancelled with no alternatives offered

8. **College Resources & IT**
   a. Network issues are so bad programs are out of date or take hours to load
   b. Some students cannot complete coursework due to the technical issues
   c. Lecturers say it is out of their hands – no ownership or responsibility

Question 2. *How prevalent/wide spread are these issues identified?*

'We, the students are ready to come to college, but we have to ask is the college ready for us? It doesn't feel like it' – class rep

When this was said out loud at the feedback part of the conference the entire room was in agreement that this statement was shared across all class reps present and in turn the students the represented.

Other comments included:

"I like my course, but all these other issues really mount up' ' it's a combination of things that make you drop out, loads of frustrations that mount up' ' good people that are just under resourced and very stressed' 'no one seems to know what they are doing, everyone tells you different things and no one takes responsibility for anything ever"

Question 3. *What do you think the College and/or ECSA can be doing to remove challenges, support more students to stay on at College and be successful?*

1. **Support for Mental Health**
   a. Train frontline staff in mental health first aid
   b. Create spaces & opportunities for students to be involved in peer to peer support (both for general community building as well as improve mental health)

   c. Students should disclose they need support for learning and be followed up with or provided information once it's been declared

   d. A proactive approach to support students' needs – let's sort more of it out during summer so it's in place for start of the college year!

2. **Funding**
   a. Funding application process needs simplified – the process needs to be clearer for students from day one, so more access it early, reducing risk of them dropping out
   b. Staff need to give consistent information
   c. There NEEDS to be a more reliable and consistent way to receive feedback on application status so students don't have to chase so hard
   d. Better management of student documentation – so we don't have to bring documents in again and again for multiple things or because a copy wasn't taken
   e. Front of house staff need to be more student centred /given customer service training/be sympathetic to student stresses and concerns

3. **Student support resource stretched**
   a. Tickets & time slots for student services – take a ticket and wait for the number to be displayed on the big screen in the Hub, rather than standing in a queue in Student Services
   b. Possible online booking for appointments that is an open calendar so students could see availability
   c. A proactive approach to funding processing & learning what students needs are so more can be dealt with over the summer.

4. **Course expectations**
   a. Marketing and curriculum teams to wok closer together – either change course delivery to reflect the course descriptor or the course descriptor need to be more reflective of the course that will be delivered.
   b. Employ current students to help write about the courses

5. **Student progression & integration**
   a. More time spent by curriculum teams looking at Class sizes & balance of merging mixed groups
   b. Facilitating student spaces for study groups /peer support & additional support for key skills.

6. **Study materials**
   a. All costs need to be included in the course description before applying for the course – what will and won't be paid for by the college ahead of time. This should include all trips and compulsory expenses

7. **Organisation**
   a. Room bookings to be fixed, current system isn't fit for purpose – more ownership for schools/curriculums – create departments communities take pressure off centralised booking.
   b. A clear communication strategy – identify people responsible – and let them be accountable for when it doesn't happen! Students get held to account for their actions, why aren't staff?
   c. Assessment dates to be given at beginning of term – curriculum teams to talk to each other and PLAN to avoid assessment bunching.
   d. An academic planner for courses but also one for the college – literally a process the college will go through when all its key dates happen
      i. When applications open
      ii. When bursary can be applied for
      iii. Car parking
      iv. Key events
      v. Welcome week events

  e. The college needs to move towards a system and process of everyone is talking to everyone and it has a joint approach to managing all students from before they arrive and until after they graduate – current feeling of "I've done my bit. That's someone else's responsibility"

8. **College Resources & IT**
  a. A review of the network & it systems and how it can be made fit for purpose for key technology focussed courses.
  b. Moodle is poorly used staff training desperately needed

Students present 90