

Context: due to room bookings issues ECSA had to cram class reps into only half of the Sighthill lecture theatre.

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. Lecturing staff don't know how to deal with students declaring mental health issues or empathise with basic anxiety and stress
- b. Students get referred on to external services that have waiting lists that are weeks or months long

2. College & Course Organisation

- a. The team work within each course team varies wildly from team to team
- b. Class cover still an issue - either not in place or not communicated, people waste hours travelling to college not to be told class was cancelled with no alternatives.
- c. Students find out classes are cancelled minutes before classes take place
- d. No suitable arrangements are put in place
- e. Long term sick cover suffers from long delays and disparity from course to course
- f. No one seems to take ownership in keeping students in the loop
- g. No clear timeline for assessment
- h. Many aspects of the course still not finalised weeks into the semester

3. Funding

- a. Funding process is Complicated & not very clear
- 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. Not having bursary on time for some students literally means they cannot travel to college due to distance meaning they fall behind right from the get go

4. Course Admissions

- a. Class reps noted many of the students who started in week 2 or 3 (or even later) are the ones who drop out first
- b. These students have the least support in place
- c. Many of them seem to be there because they couldn't get onto others

5. Course Availability

- a. Students within SWAP courses /combined courses have seen large drop outs 50% because the classes are made up of 'little tasters'
- b. Lots of frustration that most of the content 'isn't relevant' to students on these course as it has 3 elements and students are only interested in one
- c. These students think they are on these courses due to lack of availability/provision or spaces in the courses they do want to study

6. Student progression & integration

- a. Feel there is a disparity managing mixed ability groups in a classroom environment
- b. Mature students feeling that staff at times treat them like children and do not treat them like adults
- c. Lack of respect fosters bad relationship between staff & students and creates hostile learning environments

7. College Resources & IT

- a. Moodle is used inconsistently by lecturing staff

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

Students from several curriculum areas expressed they had come across these issues personally or seen classmates go through at least one if not multiple instances of these issues.

Some comments included: *'lecturers treat you like babies, I'm a mature student I really feel disrespected and frustrated'*, *'The funding process is so difficult, unclear and staff can be so dismissive'*. *'I had to chase them every step of the way, it was exhausting'*.

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. Students & staff having experience, awareness & training in Mental Health & Support

2. College & Course Organisation

- a. Course teams to plan classes, courses before the summer holiday and the next academic year
- b. Clear responsibilities for communicating with students and organising class cover
- c. Assessment timetables available from week 1 of term.

3. 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

4. Course Admissions

- a. More support & resources for getting students into the right course

5. Course Availability

- a. Marketing & curriculum teams to work to make sure the demand for courses can be met
- b. Combining random groups of students to create a 'mis-mash' class isn't great for keeping people here - as it's not what they 'came to study'

6. Student progression & integration

- a. Some form of professional development/staff training that looks at how you manage different groups of people
- b. 'Customer Service training' for front line staff

7. College Resources & IT

- a. Real training on innovative teaching methods
- b. Training for IT to be a mandatory requirement in working in a college
- c. Create a champion role for good teaching/use of technology and have them share that practise

Students present 65