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Student Services at DkIT

The aim of DkIT Student Services is to increase student retention, widen participation, develop the first-year student experience and provide support services to all DkIT full-time students. 2010/11 saw a record number of students registered in the Institute with 4,582 registered on full-time programmes and 628 on Apprenticeship Programmes. Student Services deals explicitly with non-academic support for these students and comprises the following:

- Access
- Administration
- Careers
- Chaplaincy
- Counselling
- Disability and Student Quality
- Health
- Sports & Societies

This report is intended to provide an overview of the support services, to review the highlights of the year and to develop plans to improve the services and facilities for students.

Highlights 2010/11

Each of the service providers has prepared a detailed report of their activities throughout the year. These reports are included in the Appendices. The following are some of the highlights of the services during the year:

- All service providers have continued to see an increase in usage of their service
- Applications for Mature Student places for 2011 show an increase on figures from 2010. The national trend points to a decrease so we are continuing to attract mature applicants.
- The Access Office was successful in their application for funding of almost €10,000 from State Street to support students with bursaries.
- Francis Mc Givern was appointed to the counselling service as part-time student counsellor in addition to our full-time counsellor.
- Ciara Patterson joined the team as Sports and Societies Officer from Loughborough University in the United Kingdom.
- The DkIT Counselling Service launched their on-line counselling service 'My Mind Matters' – among the first HEA's in the country. The provision of on-line counselling means that counselling is accessible to students on placement, on Erasmus programmes or for those who find it difficult to access the services currently.
- There was a slight increase in the numbers accessing the counselling service, this is in line with national figures.

- A number of information sessions and workshops were provided by the counselling service throughout the year:
 - An information session with canteen staff
 - Dealing with difficult and challenging behaviours as well as dealing with students in crisis, provided to Music Dept.
 - Advisory session provided to the International Office on the development of a protocol to support students with mental health issues
 - Advisory session on development of protocol for at risk students.
- The Careers Service facilitated group seminars/workshops throughout the academic year covering the following topics:
 - UCAS Applications
 - Final Year Class presentation on the Graduate Careers Fair
 - CV preparation and Interview Techniques
 - Routes in to Teaching as a Career
 - Postgraduate Study Options
 - Workshops for final years on 'Taking Control of Your Future and your Career'
 - Career Planning Day – 'Where are the job opportunities for all Final Year Students
 - 2 day Careers Skills Programme for Graduates with Disabilities and Specific Learning Difficulties in association with AHEAD
- DkIT Careers Service had the greatest proportion of final year students signed up to Grad-Ireland to use their online services in 2010.
- In response to a perceived need, the Disability Office offered a Supplementary Access Route for People with Disability. This scheme targets school leavers who have the capacity and ability to succeed at third level but may fall short on points because of their disability.
- The Disability Office piloted Profiler Software on three 1st year Nursing groups and provided useful information for the Department. Its capacity to highlight the learning profile of the individual whilst also providing a group profile will help in the early identification of students with learning difficulties and also render empirical data on which to base the course material delivery method.
- The opening of the Carrolls facility has facilitated the Media Society and provided access for Sports and Societies to a designated dance studio.
- This year saw the introduction of the DkIT Sports Scholarship programme with 16 students being awarded scholarships. The programme allows students to attain Sports Science support, financial support, access to sports facilities equipment and printing services.

- The 'Fit for Life' Healthy Lifestyle Programme had another successful year achieving national status by being recognised by the Irish Bishop's Drug Initiative Programme and by the College and University Sports Association of Ireland (CUSAI) who were interested in the format and layout of the programme and how it could be incorporated into various colleges and universities around the country by increasing both staff and student participation rates.

Staff in Student Services have continued to respond promptly and sensitively to the needs of students, staff and their families.

FUNDING

Funding for the provision of support services for students comes mainly from the Student Capitation Charge, which is paid by each student (or their local authority) at registration.

This charge is used to fund student facilities and amenities and a portion of the charge is used to fund general recurrent expenditure of the Institute. A new student contribution of €2,000 will be introduced in higher education with effect from 2011/12 academic year. This contribution will replace the existing Student Services Charge and is intended to secure a more significant contribution to the costs of higher education from students who qualify for the HE Free Fee Scheme.

The Counselling Service continues to develop the Mental Health Portal funded by Strategic Innovation Funds and the Access Office continues to comply with the reporting requirements for the Dormant Accounts Funding. The Student Learning and Development Centre, partly funded by Dormant Accounts and Capitation, continue to provide a comprehensive range of supports at pre-entry and post-entry. IT skills and mathematics support were made available to mature students pre-entry.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

As part of its operations, the majority of support services continually review student feedback to improve the services which they provide.

- Direct feedback was sought from service users in the Careers, Counselling and Disability Services and the Gym.
- A paper based questionnaire was distributed to a sample range of undergraduate students (651 in total) across all programmes and stages requesting feedback on Student Services. The aim of the survey was to measure awareness, usage and satisfaction. Appendix IX.
- Student Focus Groups were conducted in the second semester through the class rep system to get feedback in the areas of Examinations, Financial Administration, Communications, ICT and Library. The feedback from these focus groups was

provided to the various services and was used by the Registrars Management Team in planning for the next academic year.

For 2011/12 all service providers are encouraged to develop and update processes for continued feedback from their service users.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Student Services continues to seek ways of informing discussion with Institute members regarding issues facing students. The key challenge which continues to face service providers is the management of increased levels of service demands with no increase in resources.

Issues that arose during the 2010/11 academic year included:

- Mature Students – Increased applications of mature students has an impact on the processing of mature student applications. A review of the process needs to be carried out to ensure that there is adequate administration support for this function.
- Due to the economic downturn we have seen a large rise in the number of local students attending the health unit, in more prosperous times these students may have attended their family GP.
- This year we have seen a sharp increase in the number of students presenting to the Health Unit with psychological/psychiatric problems particularly in the mature student groups who may have pre-existing illnesses and with international students.
- There has been an increase in the numbers of non-traditional students accessing the counselling service particularly mature students with our average almost 5% higher than the national average.
- Feedback on all services is generally very positive with the main areas of concern, particularly for Health, Counselling and Careers, being the availability of appointments.
- The rate of non attendance for counselling service appointments has increased to 13%. While this is within the normal range nationally it is something that we need to address with appointments in such demand.
- Again there is a suggestion that people are not aware of all of the services with expressions of isolation in some areas of the expanded campus particularly from students in The Nursing School and Carrolls Building.
- Space:
 - There continues to be a lot of criticism of the waiting area for the counselling service and the lack of privacy. The service operates between two locations but it is hoped with the development of an upstairs room the two counsellors will be able to operate from the one location.

- The Health Unit urgently requires the additional room that will be available to them with the move of the counselling service.
- Challenging as always this year was the lack of space and access to space for sports and society activities with increased demand from students for this service.
- Student Hardship – there continues to be strong evidence that there has been an increase in the number of students who are displaying severe financial hardship. The administration requirements of the SAF, in particular the subsequent reporting requirements, continues to place a huge burden on the student services administration resources.
- The Chaplaincy service submitted a report to senior management during the year detailing some of the difficulties experienced by international students. This formed the agenda for a series of meetings regarding provision of additional supports for international students particularly when a difficulty arises outside of campus opening hours.
- Two students died during the year through motor accidents and one of our students experienced the loss of his brother. The Chaplaincy team liaised with the families of the deceased and bereaved throughout the year.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Expansion of Services

The services continue to deal with students who are vulnerable for various reasons and who may be likely to leave college prematurely. As the campus expands the Student Service Providers recognise the need to expand the services which they provide.

- Service providers identified a need for a better understanding of the cultural differences they experience in delivering their service to a multi-cultural student body. All service providers participated in a staff development day at the end of May where presentations were made by Catherine Butterly 'Working with International Students' and Kahlil Thompson Coyle from Sea Change which is the national coalition of organisations working to change minds about mental health problems in Ireland. All participants found the day to be particularly useful for the development of their services.
- It is intended to broaden the roll out of the Profiler screening software to a greater number of first year groups to highlight the learning profile of the incoming groups. Reports will be provided to Academic Departments with a view to providing a group profile which will help in the early identification of students with learning difficulties and also inform on course material delivery methods.

- The Counselling Service plans to re-launch 'My Mind Matters' with expansion of services to include synchronous counselling.
- Priority will be given to reform the Mental Health Guidelines group.
- The Counselling Service plans to develop further relevant workshops for staff groups.
- Service providers will continue to provide representation on both internal and external committees, representing student interests.

Student Learning and Development Centre - The Service Providers would particularly wish to acknowledge the continued development of this vital resource for students and have referred students throughout the year to this service. The Services have been working closely with this Centre to develop workshops to be delivered to all incoming 1st year students during the week long Department Induction.

Space- The planned move by the Counselling Service adjacent to the Health Unit with a dedicated waiting area will provide a much needed reconfiguration of the Counselling and Health spaces. It is hoped to provide a dedicated administrator for the Health/Counselling Services where appointments can be made and enquiries dealt with discretely.

Marketing of Services

- The Counselling Service will pilot a marketing drive in those schools that are least represented in attending the service.
- Student Services will develop an information leaflet to be provided to all students as part of their induction pack.
- Service providers will continue to find new ways to market their services.

Quality Assurance - Service providers will continue to monitor satisfaction of their services through the various feedback mechanisms. They continue to meet as a group on a regular basis to discuss issues facing students and service provision so as to continually improve the services they provide.

The annual reports from each of the service providers are included in the Appendices of this report. The services will continue to offer services that respond quickly and effectively to the needs of students. I wish to thank and congratulate all of the service providers for their continued dedication and commitment to enhancing the student experience.

Linda Murphy

Academic Administration & Student Affairs Manager



Staffing: Eileen Lynch, Access Officer

Mature Students

Mature Student Application Route

In 09/10 academic year, mature entrants (full time) made up 15.5% of first year entrants (full time). This compares to a HEI average of 13.6% for the same year. Applications from mature students to DkIT in 2011 show an increase on our figures for 2010. The national trend points towards a decrease so we are continuing to attract mature applicants. Interviews are ongoing as of June 2011.

The increase has an impact on the ability of the Access Office to give time to other activities once the mature entry process is up and running. A review of the process needs to be carried out to ensure that there is adequate administration support for this function.

There does not appear to be any new trends this year in terms of the profile of applicants and the programmes for which they have applied.

Contact Person for Existing Mature Students

I act as a liaison between the student and the academic staff where the student has a difficulty putting their case to lecturers. There were issues specific to certain lectures / departments. The ongoing increases in mature student numbers means that this is a significant part of the Access Officer's work e.g. retention issues with this cohort particularly in semester one.

Groups Visits to DkIT and Visits to VEC Centres

I visited both Dundalk and Drogheda VTOS centres in semester one. I followed this up by inviting students, teachers and course coordinators from the VEC centres to the campus on the 3rd of March 2011. On this structured visit, the students received a presentation of fees/grants/finances at third level, a Q&A session on the mature entry route, met with academic staff, students services staff, had an introduction to the Library, etc. they also met with a current DkIT student who had completed a course at VTOS and FETAC – this was the highlight of the visit and put a “human face” on the learning route.

Cross-Border Exhibition of Training / Education Opportunities

This took place in the Marshes Shopping Centre, Dundalk on 15th April. The Access Office, in conjunction with the Lifelong Learning Centre, took a stand at the day-long event.

TURAS Counselling Service, Dundalk.

I delivered a presentation to clients of this service on 14th March and met with people on a one to one basis.

Orientation for Incoming Mature Students

Due to numbers of incoming mature students, two Welcome Days were held September 2010. There was positive feedback to this event. The planning for the Welcome Day (to be held on one day) on 5th September 2011 is underway.

Dormant Accounts Project, Access 2009-2011 Project Manager

Management of the project involves setting out the work plan in consultation with other team members, logging work done on project, complying with reporting requirements to the HEA, etc. As a result of this funding, a comprehensive range of supports at pre-entry and post-entry were made available to access students – primarily mature students. IT skills and mathematics support were made available to mature students pre-entry.

“All of Us” Intercultural Celebration, 16th March 2011

I was a member of the team that organised DkIT's second intercultural celebration in partnership with Louth VEC. This event links in with one of the commitments in our strategic plan for Access in relation to the promotion of Traveller culture with the aim of making DkIT a welcoming environment for Traveller students.

External Representation – Traveller Sub Group of SIM

Louth County Council has a Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) group – the County Council is responsible for bringing statutory, voluntary, community etc. organisations together in an effort to coordinate their activities in respect of certain target groups and to ensure that there is no duplication in the spending of public monies. The SIM group has a number of sub-groups. I represented DkIT on the Traveller Sub Group. One of the pillars of activity is Traveller education and I worked with those in other organisations engaged on the same issue to come up with county-wide plans. DkIT's Traveller Access Scheme is one of the projects listed under the Traveller sub group.

DkIT Traveller Access Scheme

The ongoing difficulty is in identifying suitable recipients – more cooperation is needed from our external partners, particularly the Visiting Teacher Service. I am attempting to forward this via the Traveller Sub Group of SIM (see above).

DkIT Scholarship Programme

2010/11 was the fourth year of this scheme. Part-Funding of the scholarship no longer comes from Louth Leader Partnership – the programme is fully funded by DkIT. I administered the scholarship application process (advertising, contact with schools / FE colleges, sorting applications, setting up interviews, arranging payment to continuing students, ongoing contact with existing recipients, etc.). All first-year recipients of the scholarship are now required to meet with the Access Officer each semester. Recipients in other years are invited to meet with the Access Officer if they so wish – a request to do so only comes from the Access Office if examination results are poor or show signs of deterioration. All scholarship students are reminded of learning supports available to them.

Scholarship applications in 2011 have greatly increased on previous years – 63 applications were received. Monaghan was added to the list of counties involved (Louth and Cavan). The continuing decline in the economy has also undoubtedly been a factor. Moves were made over the past year to greatly increase publicity of the scholarship and this seems to have paid off.

Given the large number of applications, there is a difficulty around the time-frame for this process as it coincides with the mature entry process. There is also a restriction in terms of when these applicants can be interviewed given the difficulties around taking them out of class for interview and the dates of the Leaving Certificate examination. This will need to be reviewed in terms of

the workload of the Access Office at this time of year and the restrictions outlined above. The process may need to be moved to earlier in the year. Also, there may be an argument for holding interviews at other locations e.g. Monaghan and Cavan. This would mean that applicants that live further away from DkIT campus would not be put to expense.

State Street Bursary

The Irish subsidiary was known as IFS – now also called State Street. I applied for funding to support students in the academic year 2010/11 – as a result, DkIT received a grant of €6,173.32. This grant was used to support students with bursaries. Later in the year, State Street invited me to make another application – as a result, a further €3,551.89 was received and was used to support two students.

State Street have now handed over administration for philanthropy to a U.K. based company – CAF. I submitted a letter of interest to CAF in second semester and as a result, was invited to make a grant application. This grant application was completed in early June 2011 and if successful, the money will be used to support students.

RAPID: Area Implementation Team Representative and Education Focus Group Representative

RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) is a Government initiative which targets 45 of the most disadvantaged areas of the country. The Programme aims to ensure that priority attention is given to the 45 areas by focusing State resources available under the National Development Plan. The Programme requires Government departments and state agencies to bring about better co-ordination and closer integration in the delivery of services. An Area Implementation Team was established in each of the 45 areas to develop a plan for the Area. The AIT brings local state agency personnel (e.g. FAS, VEC, third level institutions, Health Board, local authority etc), the local Partnership company, residents of the local community etc. together to prepare a plan for each area. This is under the aegis of the Dept. of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. I acted as the DkIT representative on the AIT in Drogheda and Dundalk (both RAPID areas).

I am the DkIT representative on the Education Focus Group for the Dundalk RAPID area. As a group we discussed practical strategies for tackling educational disadvantage in Dundalk by working together in partnership. .





APPENDIX II - CHAPLAINCY

Staffing: Fr Clement Mac Manuis C.Ss.R. (Catholic) F/T

Rev. Stanley Millen (Presbyterian) P/T

Rev. Sandra Pragnell (Church of Ireland) P/T

Introduction

My appointment as full time Catholic Chaplain in the DkIT began September 1st 2011. Stanley Millen, the Methodist chaplain (27 years) is active in the Institute. During 2010/11 he continued as part time chaplain with attendance at lunch time (Monday-Thursday) and Friday afternoons. Stanley assists students to do Bible studies which help them in their spiritual life. He is particularly attentive to the Chinese and other Eastern students. Sandra Pragnell, The Church of Ireland chaplain is present on public occasions.

Role of Chaplain

The full time chaplain's role is defined in terms of a spiritual presence in the Institute. His work is not to evangelise but his presence is to be attentive and encourage, foster the spiritual needs of people involved in college life. It is hard to define this responsibility. It needs to be exercised in prudence and respect. Prudence, to know when the chaplain should be active and respect for people's privacy and freedom. It is a journeying with a person in a time of questioning certain events or aspects of their life. It is intimately linked with a search for meaning in life, and for some, the quest for God.

Bereavements and Illness

Bereavement, an experience common to staff and students, is a regular occurrence and calls for prudence and respect.

I attended most of the funerals, travelling local or distant to the home or to the church and meeting relations of students or staff and concelebrating, with the priest, conveying the sympathy of DkIT.

I try to follow up, keeping in touch by meeting them around the Institute, writing to them, phoning them or calling on them at home.

During the past year there were two deaths of students through motor accidents, neither was a case of irresponsibility. I have kept constant contact with the families. The brother of one of our students was murdered during the past year and a student from Dublin list his very close friend through murder in Finglas.

One of the nursing students from Limerick (1st year) got seriously ill and had to abandon her studies, she is make slow recovery. I have kept constant contact with her father.

I am not notified about students or staff when they are in hospital. It can be a trying time for them and with prudence and respect it may be the right thing to visit them. I would like to arrange in the coming year to do something towards answering that need if it arises.

Annual Report 2010-11

Hardship Fund, Student Assistance Fund

The meetings with students applying for the Hardship and Student Assistance Funds affords a great help in appreciating the circumstance of their lives. Similarly, listening to the staff discussing during the meetings is a constant reminder of my obligations to the students. I have been constantly impressed by efficiency and concern of the staff, and of their compassion and understanding of the student needs. I wonder sometimes does my involvement with the H.F and SAF affect my relating with students outside, few give me recognition and I wonder is it due to they 'not paying back the loan of the Hardship Fund', or the embarrassment of having met through the SAF. Allowance for their privacy, though, must be respected. However I am happy to be part of the HF and SAF when all is said and done.

Student Activities

- Stanley submitted a report to senior management during the year on some of the difficulties experienced by international students. This formed the agenda for a series of meetings regarding provision of additional supports for international students particularly during weekends.
- Clement has most student contact with the Music Department students, attending their music presentations, and being more familiar with them, at least recognising their faces, through close contact with them through my own research studies in Music, but even with the advantage, it was difficult to chat at length.
- I assigned myself as chief supporter of the Sports Hurling, and journey for two away matches with them (which we won). The lost the Final because their chaplain, their main supporter, was not informed of the change of venue at the last minute.
- I attended some of the drama productions.
- The sport awards night was presented very professionally and gave an insight into all the work of Ciara and company. Again it was a bonding night with students and staff of the Student Services Department. It is in my opinion a very important night in the year for all of us. Every effort should be made to facilitate all staff who would like to attend.
- I have tried to be supportive of students or staff helping in charity by attending, chatting with helpers, follow up with e-mail of encouragement and congratulation.
- Some students called to the office for help in their research projects. Others called for a listening ear, some to discuss a religious issue in their lives. I would always be attentive to the possibility of their need to meet with one of the counsellors. No such need arose.

- I accompanied one of the Chinese students who had to attend court for an offence.
- I greet as many as possible on my journeying around the Institute but the music in the ear cuts off so much intercourse, but also the shyness, or perhaps an atmosphere of distaining themselves from each other can generate an unfriendly presumption around the Institute. I would like to have better contact with students.
- The chaplaincy plans to produce a handout similar to the 'Counselling' leaflet and to make it available the day of introducing the Student Services to the first year students.
- Mass is celebrated each day in the Quiet Room at 1.05pm and 8.30am during Lent. I was called upon to say Masses in the Institute for several occasions such as family bereavements, for a sick student, etc. The Ash Wednesday arrangements went well, with the attendance of the Cardinal preaching, and Rev Sandra being present and distributing ashes.
- The chaplains were invited to pray a blessing for the opening of the New Carroll building, something Stanley Millen remarked he had no memory of ever happening before in his 26 years in the Institute. Stanley has also appreciated being more informed on matters concerning him, and to have the opportunity to participate in some of the more general meetings. I have certainly learned from him, and I believe he has done great work in building up a sense of belonging in the Chinese and Eastern students.
- The Opening Mass for the new academic year needs to be re-examined. There were few, if any, apart from the Student Services Department present. There is a place for a Mass but with realistic expectations, smaller location than the Whitaker Theatre but more important, perhaps, it should be an ecumenical service?
- One afternoon away from the Institute with all the Student Services staff was very useful and gave us more time to relax in each others company, to build trust and appreciation of each other. It helped focus on efficiency and better quality of service on our part, creating a happy work place where we spend so much of our lives. I liked the times we celebrated events in the office .. new babies arriving, saying goodbye to staff members moving on etc... they are important moments.

IT Chaplains Group

I had two meetings with the chaplains of the other Institutes. The October gathering is held in Athlone, with speakers, both speaking on Youth Project work – Madrid Gathering 2011, and the Eucharistic Congress 2012. The gathering is very helpful for comparing experiences, sharing difficulties and learning from each other. All agree it is a definite encouragement and inspiration to each chaplain and is of great bonding support. The Meeting in February is a CN3 gathering with chaplains from all the third level Institutes. We met in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. We went round all the major places that assist the down and outs and who are trying to bring a higher quality of life to the down trodden in our society, the homeless. The third gathering was the May gathering for the IT chaplains. Our speaker and focus for attention was Bereavement. It was an excellent input.

It will be the responsibility of the DkIT chaplain to host the IT Chaplains Get together in May 2012. I'm sure the three of us (Sandra, Stanley and myself) can undertake it.

The IT Factor, the brainchild of the chaplains, was reviewed at the May/June meeting. 2011 was the first year DkIT participated. It is meant to be a fun gathering not with emphasis on winning, however, I felt that next year, since we have a Department of Music here, the IT Factor should get better attention. I would hope to discuss this with the Music Department and plan accordingly. The IT Factor Final 2012 will be held in Castlebar IT.

As chaplain in my work, I would like to report on the constant, efficiency and support of the team/staff in the Student Services office. They are most obliging and helpful. I would not want to take it for granted as a fellow worker.

APPENDIX III – COUNSELLING SERVICE



Staffing: Gertie Raftery, Student Counsellor F/T
Francis Mc Givern, Student Counsellor P/T

This has been an eventful year for the Student Counselling Service with the launch of the My Mind Matters Website which has given the service a better profile both in the Institute and nationally. Francis Mc Givern was appointed to the service and has had an important input particularly in the area of marketing the service. Where possible in the report this year we have endeavoured to bench mark our service figures against national statistics. These were obtained from the Irish Association of University and College Counsellors which collates figures from the counselling services of 16 colleges nationally.

SERVICE TO STUDENTS

This year saw a number of advances in our service to students:

- The launch of the My Mind Matters in February and the provision of an online Counselling service meant that DkIT is among the first organisations in the country to provide this service.
- We commissioned a student to prepare a video and a viral to publicise the launch.
- The website has been updated and now includes a video introduction by the counsellors so that clients could see the counselling room and the counsellor to allay some of their fears.
- We have also re-launched and redeveloped our client information leaflet.

SERVICE STATISTICS

The proportion of students assessing the counselling service is very much in line with the national figures. The percentage of student body seen for counselling was 4.48 with the national average at 4.47. It is worth noting that this national figure is increasing each year from a low of 4.25 in 2005/06.

There was a slight increase (+5.8%) in the numbers accessing the service this year though not as big an increase as in previous years.

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	IAUCC
No of clients	125	124	144	211	224	
Average sessions per client	6.9	6.4	4.8	3.9	4.3	4.49
Gender	F 56% M 41%	F 73% M 26%	F 59% M 39%	F 61% M 39%	F 62% M 38%	F 64% M 36%

It is worth noting that there was just one counsellor in the service up until December when Francis Mc Givern joined the service for three days a week, so the increased numbers put a lot of strain on the service.

In line with expectations there has been an increase in the numbers of non-traditional students accessing the service particularly mature students with our average almost 5% higher than the national average.

	DkIT	IAUCC
Mature	25%	20.5%
International	10%	10.2%
Disabled	4.2%	3.4%
Access	8.8%	N/A

The provision of on-line counselling through My Mind Matters means that counselling is accessible to students when they are out on placement, on Erasmus programmes or for those who find it difficult to access the service currently because of time constraints. Just 8 students accessed on-line counselling this year – the service was launched on the 9th February.

The rate of non-attendance has increased to 13% and while this is well within the normal range it is something we intend to address as appointments are in such demand. The cancellation rate is 11%.

Presentation Issues:

These are the issues that bring the student to the counselling service. The initial reason cited may not be the real troubling issue, so to get an accurate picture up to 3 issues are recorded per client. A breakdown of these is given below. The figures are ranked in order of most frequently presenting for DkIT with the comparable figure nationally in the next column.

PRESENTING ISSUES	DKIT	IAUCC
Loss	16%	7.4%
Abuse	13.4%	2.5%
Anxiety	10.2%	19%
Academic	9.6%	18.1%
Depression	9.1%	14.2%
Self & Identity	7.8%	8.3%
Relationships	7.3%	12.1%
Self Harm	7.1%	2.3%
Addictive behaviours	6.1%	3.6%
Physical Health	6.1%	2.1%
Welfare & Employment	2%	2.1%
Eating Disorders	1%	1.8%
Sexual Issues	1%	0.2%
Other mental Health	0.75%	2.5%

Again the most common presenting issue is loss. Breaking this figure down further the most common loss reported is that of separation/divorce of a client's parents followed by bereavement. It is worth noting that our figure is more than twice the national average.

The discrepancy in the 2nd most reported issue – Abuse – is even more marked. Breaking these figures down further the most common abuse was bullying followed by physical and psychological abuse with significant figures also for anger difficulties.

The rates for self-harm continue to fall, dropping from 9.8% in 2008/09 and it is also gratifying to see depression dropping down to 5th.

Plans for 2011-2012

- The planned move to new offices with a dedicated waiting area and our own Administrative assistant will make the service much more accessible and private. This is a real issue for students as will be evident from Section 3. It is hoped to develop the waiting area as a self care “hot-spot” where students will be able to access relation and other programmes on their I-pods and I-phones.
- The Student Counselling Service is preparing an hour long introductory workshop that will be delivered to all 1st year students.
- Further marketing and re-launch of My Mind Matters with expansion of services to include synchronous counselling.
- Redevelop and streamline the service's assessment protocol in line with best practice.

STUDENTS' ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The My Mind Matters website has been developed by the service and our partners in NUIG, UCC and TCD as part of a SIF2 Funded initiative. The site provides secure access for 3rd level students to online credible mental health and wellbeing information. This information will be constantly updated and will use the skills of our students to develop material in a range of media formats.

The service also provided a number of targeted workshops to mature students and the nursing student group.

The service redeveloped its Client Information Leaflet and this is widely available throughout the Institute and hopes to demystify the counselling experience.

The service contributed to Fit 4 Life week and our leaflet on responsible sexual behaviour “Let's Talk Sex” was distributed in the Student Union SHAG packs.

Plans for 2011-2012

- The service is going to pilot a marketing drive in those schools that are least represented in those attending the Counselling service.
- Priority to reform the Mental Health Guidelines group.
- Develop a bibliotherapy list for the library so that students can access a range of self help materials.

FEEDBACK FROM SERVICE USERS

We received detailed feedback from 20% of our users this year. We have still not achieved optimum distribution of the feedback questionnaire and our aim is that it will go to all clients two months after counselling is complete.

Feedback is generally very positive. The main areas of concern are the waiting area and availability of appointments. As there was quite a long waiting list on a couple of occasions throughout the year this is not surprising.

Again there is a suggestion that people are not aware of the service, our recent marketing initiatives have focussed on this.

Plans for 2011-2012

- Feedback form to be issued to client two months after close of counselling which is consistent with best practice guidelines. There is an alert now set up on our database which will provide a prompt when a client is closed or they have not been attending.
- Work is beginning on adjacent counselling rooms with separate waiting area. It is also hoped that we will have dedicated administrative support to make appointments and deal with enquiries discretely.
- In order to have more counselling hours available without financial implications we intend to explore the possibility of getting a placement student from Masters in Counselling Programme in TCD.

EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE

The service has been using the CORE clinical outcome measure for the last number of years. This is an internationally recognised measure of client distress. The mean score for all clients at intake is a full 7 points above the clinical range cut off which means that clients presenting to the service are generally very distressed.

Though the numbers completing the post counselling measure are small they indicate a mean decrease in distress of over 9 points bringing them well below the clinical cut-off which demonstrates the effectiveness of counselling.

The service is now benchmarking itself against national statistics from IAUCC.

The service is using Penelope Case Management Database which is now fully operational and allows us to schedule appointments, manage waiting lists and worker case load as well as providing relevant accurate reports.

As already mentioned, the service is at the cutting edge in terms of the development of on-line mental health support and online counselling. The service prepared a number of press releases on this and also van an interview on local radio.

Plans for 2011-2012

- Pilot focussed marketing of service to currently under-represented groups.
- Investigate ways of using information from CORE as a way of targeting support initiatives.

ADVISING DkIT MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

A number of information sessions and workshops were held with staff. One of the most useful was a short information session with the canteen staff at the invitation of the canteen manager. As a result of this staff seemed to have felt much more valued and empowered and we received a number of contacts from staff worried about students.

A session was also held with the staff of the Music Department about dealing with difficult and challenging behaviour as well as dealing with students in crisis.

The service provided support for a number of staff setting up innovative ways to support students e.g. peer mentoring, buddy system.

The service also liaised with the International Office around the support of students with mental health difficulties and advised on the development of a protocol on the issue. The service was also involved in advising on development of a protocol for at risk students.

We were also involved in dealing with a serious bullying incident in a department and in advising management about how best to resolve it.

Plans for 2011-2012

- Develop further relevant workshops for staff groups.
- Make contact with other ancillary staff groups e.g. Caretakers
- Involve staff representatives from all departments in the development of mental health guidelines.



APPENDIX V - HEALTH UNIT



Staffing: Nurse Briega Rust, F/T

Nurse Patricia Smith, P/T (20 hours/week)

Dr Shane Gleeson, P/T (10 hours/week)

Objectives of the Service

The Health Unit aims to provide a holistic approach to all areas of student health. To treat with respect and care all students who come to the health unit irrespective of age, race or gender. To provide on-going health promotion on a one to one basis in the health unit with each individual student.

Observations during the current year:

In the last academic year we have continued to see a large number of students on a daily basis in the Health Unit.

Month	Numbers Attending 2009/10	Numbers Attending 2010/11	Doctor No's 2009/10	Doctor No's 2010/11	Repeat Script Note 1*
Sept	534	418	288	314	114
Oct	555	489	401	321	120
Nov	530	501	296	336	126
Dec	460	366	285	234	78
Jan	321	284	100	242	66
Feb	510	521	330	412	120
March	490	512	360	440	132
April	360	355	250	242	66
May	370	400	240	238	114

NOTE 1: Due to the large volume of students attending the Health Unit, arrangements were put in place for students to order repeat prescriptions by telephone and/or e-mail. Prescriptions could then be collected in the students own time following short medical check, example weight and blood pressure check.

NOTE 2: Remaining students (Apprentices) still attending the Health Unit in small numbers in June 2011. Dr Gleeson seeing them when necessary in his practice in Lis na Dara free of charge to the student.

NOTE 3: Dr Gleeson seeing antenatal students over the summer period in Lis na Dara

NOTE 4: Dr Gleeson is seeing students for on-going treatment for TB and TB prophylaxis over the summer period in Lis na Dara.

- The Practice Room: we have found that the additional practice area i.e. room off the Health Unit to be of less benefit than hoped for. There is no link between the Health Unit proper and this practice room. The room can only be accessed from the waiting room area. Keys must be used for opening and closing the door each time (secure locks on all doors). However we have used the room as a sick bay area for students unable to return to class or who are waiting to see the Doctor.

There is only one window which opens out onto the corridor and the nature of the work necessitates that this window is closed with a blind. Many of the students find the room very confined and stuffy as there is no natural ventilation which does not lend itself to a healthy environment. Whilst we welcome the additional space, a different configuration of space would be advantageous to the quality of care afforded to the students.

- Due to the economic downturn we have seen a large rise in the number of local students attending the health unit. In more prosperous times these students may have preferred to attend their own familiar GP and would have had the financial means to do so. However with the sharp rise in parental unemployment and/or loss of part time jobs for students these local students have been attending the college service for the first time in large numbers. The parents of many of these students also fall into the category where their income is just above the eligibility ceiling for a medical card. These students in many instances are unable to afford prescription charges. The student in many cases leaves it to the last minute when they are very ill to see the doctor due to worry over the cost of the medicines. In these hardship cases the health unit does its best to provide assistance.
- Due to the closure of all acute services at the Louth County Hospital with the exception of the nurse run minor injury unit 8.00am to 8.00pm, all of our students presenting with acute illness or injury must make their way to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda. This has been a great imposition to the students. If unfit to travel by bus alternative transport has to be arranged. The average taxi fare to Drogheda is €40 each way. In extreme hardship cases the college provides free taxi service. The average waiting time to be seen in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital is six hours adding to further hardship for the sick student.

- The health service in DkIT in common with other third level institutions in the country experienced a sharp rise in the number of students presenting and being diagnosed with tuberculosis. This has given rise to additional workload for the doctor and nurses. In addition to the affected students their contacts e.g. classmates and/or housemates needed to be assessed, referred to infectious control (Dr Lucy Adams, Dr John Kiely, HSE NE) given treatment if required, given prophylactic treatment (follow up monitoring, blood tests etc.). The majority of students presenting and being diagnosed with tuberculosis were international students. Dr Gleeson has recommended to the International Office in DkIT that non-European students travelling from abroad should have their Mantoux/BCG status assessed prior to travelling to Ireland.
- This current academic year has also seen a sharp increase in the number of students presenting with psychological/psychiatric problems. Once again many of these students are international students. We have also seen a sharp rise in psychological/psychiatric illness in the mature student group. Many of these mature students have pre-existing illness's. This has resulted in additional workload for the health service. The counselling service in the college has been a great support to us with many of these students suffering from mental illness. The direct referral by a GP service in St. Bridget's Hospital, Ardee

(under the care of Dr Geraldine Lyster) has also provided essential support to us. IN the cases of international students attending St Bridget's Hospital the language barrier proved very difficult for both the patient and the care givers in the hospital. However great kindness was shown to our students by the staff of St Bridget's when it was required.

Plans for the coming year:

Unfortunately due to budget and space restrictions the layout of the health unit remains the same. A proper connecting or accessible practice area is essential for the optimum care of our growing numbers and attendees to the health unit. It is hoped that the next academic year will see the much needed reconfiguration of the health unit layout.

Due to the increased work load as outlined above, having a second nurse working twenty hours per week Monday to Thursday has become inadequate. There is now a requirement for additional help in the afternoons for at least eight extra hours per week. This could take the form of additional nursing hours or administrative help e.g. medical receptionist. This additional help would cover lunch breaks and insure safe continuity of care for the student body.





APPENDIX VI - SPORTS AND SOCIETIES

Staffing: Ciara Patterson, Sports and Societies Officer, F/T

Introduction

With 66 Sporting Clubs and Non Sporting Societies in DkIT, including a number of new clubs it was a very busy and active year for all concerned.

During the year DkIT Sports and Societies enhanced campus life, created communities, contributed significantly to their members' holistic education and provided numerous opportunities to compete, entertain and gain independency and responsibility.

As Sports and Societies continue to develop in the college it will be important to constantly formulate new ways to entice students and provide them with the opportunities to feel a valuable part of the student community. Sports and Societies provide students with the chance to meet new people, experience new settings and are a valuable asset in the fight against loneliness and isolation. Departmental societies, in particular, provide an important link between students and academics. Support from staff is crucial for the ongoing success of departmental societies in particular.

One of the many challenges which we constantly face is the lack of space and access to facilities, however, this year has seen the official opening of the PJ Carroll Facility which has helped to facilitate our Media Society and also provides us with access to a designated dance studio.

DkIT's Sports Clubs and Societies activities

The 2010/2011 year saw 2,746 members within DkIT Sports Clubs and Societies. On a national level it is estimated that on average students within colleges will join two or three sports clubs and/or societies, which would mean that in DkIT we have between 915-1,373 individual members, of which half would be active members.

Below is a full list of active sports clubs and societies during 2010/2011, with membership numbers:

Accounting & Finance	87	Cinema-Filming Society	11
Adventure Club	32	DJ Society	105
Airsoft Club	92	Equestrian	69
Archery Club	40	Fashion Society	10
Athletics Club	7	Fencing Club	129
Badminton Club	80	Fit 4 Life	16
Bowling Club	6	Film Making/Media Soc	122
Breakdancing Society	43	Fianna Fail	15
Camogie Club	27	French Society	43
Chinese Society	16	Freshers Gaelic F Ball	79
Capoeira	16	Hip Hop Club	10
Christian Union Society	31	Hurling Club	35
Cricket Club	34	Inline Hockey	31
Console Gaming Society	33	Irish Dancing	32

Kenpo Karate Club	80	Snow Sports	20
Kick-Boxing Club	203	Surf Club	115
LGBT Society	33	Go Karting Society	95
Laptop Music Society	89	Golf Club	15
Ladies Gaelic Football Club	106	Gospel Choir Society	30
Men's Soccer Club	93	Growing Food Society	30
Men's Rugby Club	25	Hill Walking Club	39
Macra Na Feirme	15	Women's Basketball	79
Mature Students Society	64	Women's Soccer Club	31
Men's Basketball Club	54	Young Surveyors Soc	95
Men's Gaelic Football Club	43	Table Tennis Club	71
Nigerian Society	18	Traditional Music Soc	20
Ogra Sinn Fein	23	Veterinary Nursing Soc	70
Paint balling Club	75	Tennis Club	1
Photographic Society	44	Volleyball Club	93
Poker Society	52	Women's Rugby Club	25
Pool Club	67	Yoga Club	160
Salsa	75	Zumba Society	83

Highlights during 2010/2011:

- Kenpo Club held various coaching sessions and seminars with external trainers from outside colleges demonstrating their knowledge with the sport. This proved to have been very successful with DkIT coach, Barry Judge Mc Cormack, being asked to host a seminar in Trinity College
- DkITs' Fencing Clubs' Alex Lollies won Silver at the Fencing National Championships in April 2011, focussing her disappointment of the Varsity result into achieving a good result at the Nationals.
- DkIT Table Tennis club lost their title to Carlow IT at the Intermediate Championships, however, the team still achieved a Silver medal at the competition staving off Trinity and UCD.
- Society of Young Surveyors hosted their annual SYS Ball on April 7th 2011, which was very successful and was well attended by both students and staff.
- The College sports facilities throughout the year were used by various Inter County GAA Squads, Interprovincial Rugby Teams, College and University Teams, School Teams and various local teams. One such team was the Ladies Australian Rules Team.
- 'Fit 4 Life' Project achieved national status by being recognised by both the Irish Bishop Drug Initiative Programme (IBDI) and also by CUSAI. The IBDI incorporated the Fit 4 Life Project into their promotional material which would be promoted throughout the country.

- Rosemary Talon (1st Year PR Student) competed in the IPC Athletics World Championships in Christchurch, New Zealand in January 2011. Due to being classed in a higher class and competing at a higher level than what she had trained at, Rosemary lost her No. 1 world ranking title and now is ranked No. 4 for Shot Putt and No. 5 for Discus. This is a great achievement and Rosemary is hoping to regain her No. 1 title at the 2012 Olympic Games in London.
- Paul Fitzpatrick attained a Silver medal for the 3,000m walk at both the Track and Field Championship in the Antrim Forum in April 2011 and also in the Universities Championships in February 2011.
- Dundalk IT's first ever Cricket Club reached the semi-finals of the Intervarsity this year, being defeated by University of Ulster.
- This year also saw the first year of Dundalk IT's Sports Scholarship programme. The Scholarship was opened for all students to apply. The programme allows scholars to attain Sports Science Support, Financial Support, Access to Sports Facilities, Sports Equipment, Vouchers for Canteen and Printing and photocopying. There were 16 students awarded with scholarship:

Rosemary Talon (Athletics)	Derek Maguire (Gaelic Football)
Colm Smith (Gaelic Football)	Daire Lawless (Kickboxing)
Philip Corway (Kickboxing)	Grace Murray (Soccer)
Kevin Lacey (Basketball)	Grainne Miggins (Athletics)
Aine Keogh (Camogie)	Damien Whelan (Administration)
Brian Fitzpatrick (Gaelic Football)	

DkIT Sports and Societies Awards 2010

The fifth annual Sports and Societies awards night was held on Thursday 31st March 2011 in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk. This event recognised various students, staff and/or individuals for their involvement and contribution to Student based activities in DkIT, and were attended by over 200 people.

Placement Students

During the first semester Shirley Flood, a Community Sports Leadership Student was placed in the Sports and Societies Office, while during the second semester Daire Lawless and Eoin Feagan, both 3rd year students on the Health Promotion programme worked in the office. As a result of having all three students placed in the Sports and Societies Office, the office was able to promote, expand and develop a range of clubs and societies activities such as the 'Fit for Life' project, which this year was run from February to late March. This could not have been achieved without the guidance of the 2

work placement students.

'Fit for Life' Healthy Lifestyle Programme

The Fit 4 Life programme ran over 7 weeks this year as opposed to the 6 weeks over the previous year. The 7 weeks covered the following areas on the run up to Easter:

Launch Week (a week to promote and sign up students and staff for the activities that would be running over the 6 weeks)

Responsible Sexual Behaviour

Alcohol Awareness

Nutrition Week

General Health Awareness

Mental Health Awareness

Fitness/Physical Activity

All events were well attended by both staff and students alike. One programme, which was run by the work placement students, the half marathon training programme, saw staff and students train together over the 7 weeks and during the 4th week the trainees were given specific fitness tests in order to monitor their progress. This has proved to have been a very successful programme and boosts physical activity levels within the College. Other events over the programme included Come Dine with DkIT (which included our own representative from 'Fit 4 Life', Killian Farrelly, beer goggles challenge, Clubs & Societies Obstacle Course, comedians and health talks to name but a few.

Fit 4 Life also achieved recognition from the College and University Sports Association of Ireland (CUSAI) who were interested in the format and layout of the programme and how it could be incorporated into various colleges and universities around the country by increasing both staff and student participation rates.

DkIT Fitness Suite

Type of Membership	2009/10 Members	2010/11 Members
Student – Full Year	152	114
Staff – Full Year	8	4
Student Half Year	53	50
Staff Half Year	2	4
Student Monthly	26	18
Staff Monthly	-	4
Summer	2	2
Scholarships	-	16
Total Number	247	212



APPENDIX VII – CAREERS SERVICE

Staffing: Harriet Andrews, Careers Officer
Marie Rogers (Grade III) P/T

Introduction

The DkIT Careers Service is a free and confidential service offered to current full-time students (Level 6-9) and graduates of a maximum of two years. The Service also responds to queries from potential students and parents, school guidance counsellors and teachers and guidance counsellors working with adults in the Adult Guidance Service in neighbouring county VEC's, and agencies such as Enterprise Ireland, County Enterprise Boards, IBEC and FAS.

Membership of Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS) Gradireland

Dundalk IT Careers Service, together with the careers services from twenty three other Institutes of Technology and universities throughout Ireland, is a member of AHECS, which is the representative body for Careers Services in higher education in Ireland. The Association provides invaluable information, resources, support and training for all member institutions. Materials provided by Gradireland in collaboration with the Association comprise the vast majority of resources that all careers services have to offer their students. These materials, on line and hard copy, are constantly being updated by practitioners in the HE sector.

Accessing DkIT Careers Service and trends

Approximately 600 in-person career queries were dealt with by the DkIT Careers Service in the 2010/2011 academic year. This data is based on the number of queries recorded via email on the Careers shared calendar and those recorded directly on the Careers database of appointments. This number represents those who presented in the Careers Office in the Student Services Centre and does not include all those who attended Careers Seminars (or other Careers Events) held throughout the academic year. Nor does it represent an increasing number of email (initial and follow up) and telephone calls from students.

DkIT's Careers Service is now available on Facebook and Twitter, as well as our usual RSS Feed and mail list.

A detailed report table is available from the Careers Office that gives a breakdown of numbers of students and graduates who used the DkIT Careers Service in 2010/11 including the programme of study they were on.

Group Seminars/Workshops

In addition to drop-in and one-to-one consultations, the Careers Service also held group seminars throughout the academic year for groups ranging from 10 people to over 100. These ran fortnightly or monthly, depending on demand and looming closing dates. The Seminars, some of which were facilitated by an external trainer, covered the following topics/areas:

- UCAS Applications
- Final Year Class presentations on the 2010 Graduate Careers Fair
- CV preparation and Interview Techniques
- Routes into Teaching as a Career
- Postgraduate Study Options
- Career Planning Workshops for Final Year Students of 2010/11 to assist students to 'Take Control of Your Future and Your Career'
- DkIT Career Planning Day – 'Where are the Job Opportunities for all Final Year Students'
- 2-day Careers Skills Programme for Graduates with Disabilities and Specific Learning Difficulties – in association with AHEAD

Employers

The DkIT Careers Office continues to provide a free service to potential employers. Vacancies are advertised on www.dkit.ie/careers and the notice boards, and emailed directly to the relevant students and graduates on our alumni list. The Service invited a number of local employers to participate in Careers Workshops throughout the year. This initiative received positive feedback from participating students and graduates. The Careers Service also uses the annual Gradireland careers fair (October), the Postgraduate fair (February) and Summer careers fair (June) in the RDS Dublin to maintain and develop relationships with national and international employers. The careers officer is on the panel of CV advisers for all students who attend these three national careers fairs.

Graduate Destinations Survey 2010

The DkIT Careers Office was responsible for the collation of data on what the class of 2010 did career wise upon graduation. Graduates were posted the graduate destination survey in November 2010. The response rate was a disappointing 24% of a total number of 922 graduates surveyed. We do not survey those graduates who are enrolled on a higher level course after graduation 2010.

The key findings from this 24% grouping include:

- Employed 64% - this includes full time, part time and contract employment
- In further education 14%
- Seeking employment 19%

It is difficult to make any significant conclusions from the data presented. It is however noteworthy that 27% of respondents who are currently in employment stated that they had worked with their current employer prior to graduation, indicating that a number of our graduates would appear to be 'underemployed', a factor consistent with the previous year and also the market trends in recessionary times. Consistent with previous years, a significant majority of graduates rated their experience of studying in Dundalk IT as being either excellent or good.

Annual gradireland sign-ups competition

The DkIT Careers Office won the annual competition with gradireland for the greatest proportion of final year students who sign up to gradireland to use their online services since September 2010. This demonstrates that our students are aware of the services available from gradireland that are so key to their career decisions and plans.

Plans for the coming year

- To increase the usage and following on Twitter and Facebook as a means of promoting career events and gaining user feedback
- To link with DkIT Times in covering career events taking place on campus.
- To develop further opportunities through partnership with Alumni.
- To promote the Careers Information Resource Area as a central location for conducting careers research in relation to work, further study and opportunities abroad.





Staffing: Sinead Dunne (Grade VI) F/T
Anne-Marie Gillespie (Grade IV) F/T
Brenda Murnaghan (Grade IV) F/T
Yvonne Magill (Grade III) P/T
Marie Rogers (Grade III) P/T

Introduction

Student Services Administration provides administrative support to all of the student service providers. Contact can be made with the service providers through staff in the Student Services Office.

Throughout the year the administration staff responded to student queries, needs, concerns and difficulties on a confidential basis. Student Service Administration dealt with a broad range of issues for students and engaged with external bodies, academic departments and administration offices throughout the institute in relation to student matters. Staff from Student Services Administration played a major role in induction and orientation as part of enhancing the first year experience. They provided support for an information desk set up specifically to welcome first-year students and to assist with any queries they had. Student Services also staffed an information stand at registration and distributed leaflets and information on the support services available at the Institute. Service providers also provided information at the stand to students and parents giving an opportunity to learn about the supports available.

The Student Services Officer, together with the service providers, participated in class visits in order to inform first years of the services available.

Student Assistance Fund

The Student Services Office continued to administer the Student

Assistance Fund. The Student Assistance Fund (SAF) at DkIT is funded by the Irish Government and DkIT Capitation, and part-funded by the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013. The Fund provides limited support for full-time DkIT students who are in severe financial difficulties due to unforeseen circumstances, or who are disadvantaged and require additional financial support to enable them in so far as is possible to participate fully in their studies while at the Institute. The Fund was administered by the Student Services Office and the Student Assistance Committee, examining each application on a case by case basis. Students who applied to the fund were assessed on an individual and confidential basis. Students were required to produce financial information to support their application for assistance.

The Student Assistance Fund supported 216 students in 2010-2011. The allocation to DkIT for the Student Assistance Fund for 2010-11 was €143,552.

Students Union

The Students Services Officer worked closely with the Students Union in relation to financial matters, expenditure and student welfare. This ensured day to day liaison with the students union and formed the link between Institute Management and the Union.

APPENDIX IX – STUDENT SERVICES SURVEY 2010/11

Background of Survey:

The aim of this survey was to measure awareness, usage and satisfaction of the support services.

This survey was distributed in hard copy to a sample range of undergraduate students (651 in total) across all stages and programmes during their end of year Examinations in May 2011.

As over 80% of students who completed the survey were in the under 24 year age category this would likely impact on the findings of the survey.

Key Findings:

- Over three quarters of the students surveyed were aware of the support services available. The exception being the mature student supports where just over half of the students being aware of the supports available but as mentioned above this may be indicative of the age category of the students surveyed.
- Health Unit:
>16% expressed an interest >47% availed of the service
Sports & Societies:
25% expressed an interest >30% availed of the service
Careers Service:
>13% expressed an interest >10% availed of the service
Access – Mature Student Support:
>3% expressed an interest <3% availed of the service
Counselling Service:
>3% expressed an interest >5% availed of the service
Disability Service:
<1% expressed an interest >2% availed of the service
- Over 25% of the students surveyed have availed of the services of the Health Unit over the last academic year with over 16% availing of clubs and societies.
- Students from the Nursing and Carrolls buildings have expressed feelings of isolation from the College Community.
- The majority of students surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied with the services they received and would recommend the service to a friend.
- The majority of students indicated that they were satisfied with the knowledge and assistance and confidentiality shown to them by staff in the Student Services Centre.
- The majority of students indicated that they were satisfied with the location and access to the Student Services Centre.
- The majority of students rated the marketing and communications from each of the services as good. However, areas for improvement were identified as the use of posters and FACEBOOK.

Conclusion/Recommendations:

- The Student Support Services acknowledge that not all students should need to access the services provided but should be aware of their availability.
- The Service Providers will continue to market their services throughout the academic year with the aim of raising awareness to all students.
- Student Services are working closely with the Student Learning and Development Centre and School Departments in changing the format of 1st Year Induction. This induction will provide the support services with a better opportunity to introduce their services to students. It is hoped that incorporating a talk by each Service Provider relevant to their service will increase awareness and make the induction more relevant to students.
- A marketing campaign particularly for the students in the Carrolls and Nursing buildings should be considered throughout the year.
- Follow up induction for 1st and subsequent years should be provided later in the term when the information might become more relevant to students.

STUDENT SERVICES SURVEY 2010/11

Total Completed Survey 651 (100%)

1. Your Age:

Your Age: 17< 0.6% (4)
 18-24 82.3% (513)
 25-34 14% (87)
 35+ 3% (19)

2. Student Services provides advice and a range of non academic supports to students. Are you aware of the following supports available to you?

	YES	NO
Access – mature student support	55.7% (352)	44.5% (281)
Counselling Service	74.7% (481)	25.6% (165)
Careers Service	73.3% (469)	26.9% (172)
Chaplaincy Service	75.2% (482)	25.0% (160)
Disability Service	62.5% (396)	37.5% (238)
Health Unit	84.4% (546)	15.6% (101)
Sports & Societies	91.0% (583)	9.2% (59)

3. Which Service listed are you most interested in/most relevant to you?

Access - mature student support	19
Counselling Service	17
Careers Service	70
Chaplaincy Service	4
Disability Service	4
Health Unit	86
Sports & Societies	131

4. Which of the support services have you used in 2010/11?

Access - mature student support	2.9% (10)
Counselling Service	5.6% (19)
Careers Service	10.5% (36)
Disability Service	2.6% (9)
Health Unit	47.7% (163)
Sports & Societies	30.7% (105)

5. How satisfied are you with the service you received?

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't know	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Access - mature student support	3.5% (15)	2.8% (12)	75.5% (326)	14.4% (62)	3.9% (17)
Counselling Service	2.8% (12)	3.3% (14)	74.4% (314)	15.4% (65)	4.0% (17)
Careers Service	6.6% (29)	8.4% (37)	59.5% (263)	20.8% (92)	5.0% (22)
Chaplaincy Service	1.9% (8)	1.2% (5)	73.6% (310)	19.7% (83)	3.6% (15)
Disability Service	2.6% (11)	3.1% (13)	74.8% (315)	15.2% (64)	4.5% (19)
Health Unit	5.6% (27)	4.8% (23)	35.2% (170)	33.7% (163)	20.9% (101)
Sports & Societies	6.1% (27)	2.5% (11)	41.0% (183)	35.9% (160)	14.8% (66)

6. Would you recommend the service to other students?

	YES	NO
Access - mature student support	75.2% (337)	24.8% (111)
Counselling Service	78.6% (341)	21.4% (93)
Careers Service	81.1% (348)	18.9% (81)
Chaplaincy Service	72.7% (304)	27.3% (114)
Disability Service	78.8% (324)	21.2% (87)
Health Unit	87.3% (411)	12.7% (60)
Sports & Societies	87.5% (399)	12.5% (57)

7. Your views on the Student Services Office?

	very dissatisfied	dissatisfied	don't know	satisfied	Very satisfied
Location	3.2% (18)	9.2% (51)	20.5% (114)	60.9% (339)	6.8% (38)
Welcoming & Assistive	3.6% (20)	7.4% (41)	27.5% (153)	50.2% (279)	11.3% (63)
Knowledge of Office Staff	3.2% (18)	7.0% (39)	31.2% (173)	48.0% (266)	10.5% (58)
Ease of access to office area	3.1% (17)	6.9% (38)	26.6% (147)	51.9% (287)	11.8% (65)
Helpfulness of verbal information	2.7% (15)	5.9% (33)	30.2% (168)	50.4% (281)	11.1% (62)
Helpfulness of written information	3.1% (17)	5.2% (29)	32.8% (182)	49.0% (272)	9.9% (55)
Issue resolved to your satisfaction	4.4% (24)	8.4% (46)	32.2% (177)	45.3% (249)	10.0% (55)
Confidentiality of information shared	2.4% (13)	2.8% (15)	37.9% (202)	45.0% (240)	11.8% (63)

8. How would you rate the communication/marketing of each of the services?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Access - mature student support	9.1% (42)	49.2% (227)	29.7% (137)	11.9% (55)
Counselling Service	11.6% (54)	50.5% (236)	28.3% (132)	9.6% (45)
Careers Service	10.1% (47)	49.5% (231)	28.7% (134)	12.2% (57)
Chaplaincy Service	12.0% (54)	54.5% (246)	25.9% (117)	8.2% (37)
Disability Service	9.4% (43)	48.8% (223)	28.4% (130)	13.6% (62)
Health Unit	17.7% (86)	51.5% (251)	24.8% (121)	6.0% (29)
Sports & Societies	26.5% (126)	52.8% (251)	17.1% (81)	4.2% (20)
Student Services Administration	17.6% (76)	52.4% (226)	22.5% (97)	7.4% (32)

9. In your opinion how can the Service Providers listed above increase their presence for students in the Institute?

Student e-mail	19.8% (95)
Website	15.0% (72)
FACEBOOK page	26.0% (125)
Posters	27.0% (130)
Improved Signage	12.3% (59)

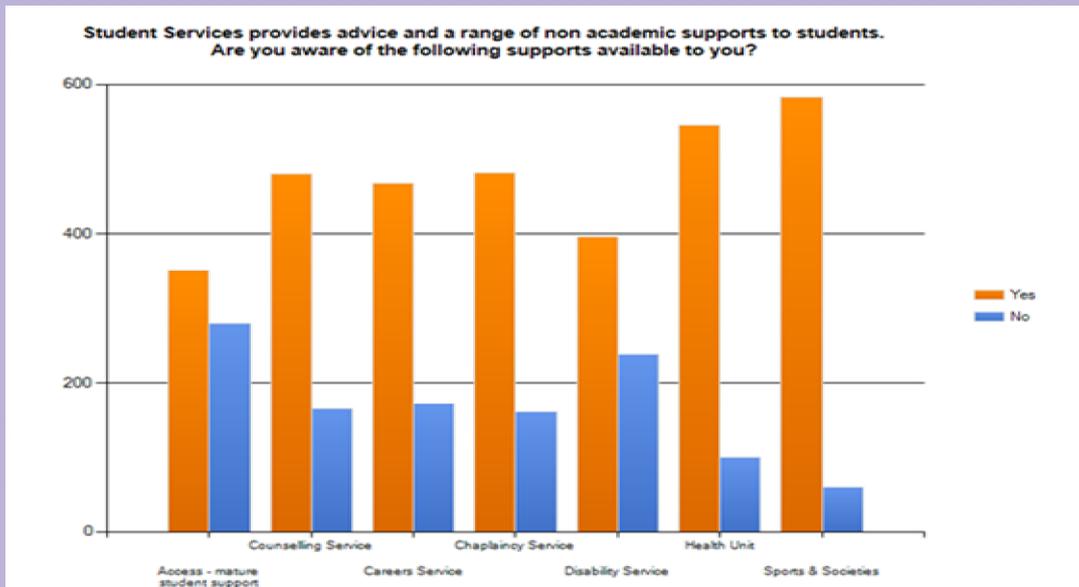


Figure 1: Awareness of Support Services Available

The indication is that the majority of students are aware of the support services on offer.

The percentage awareness of one service over another may be indicative of students making themselves aware of the services they necessitate, on a need to know basis. This substantiates a case for follow up induction during term 1 or at the start of the second term.

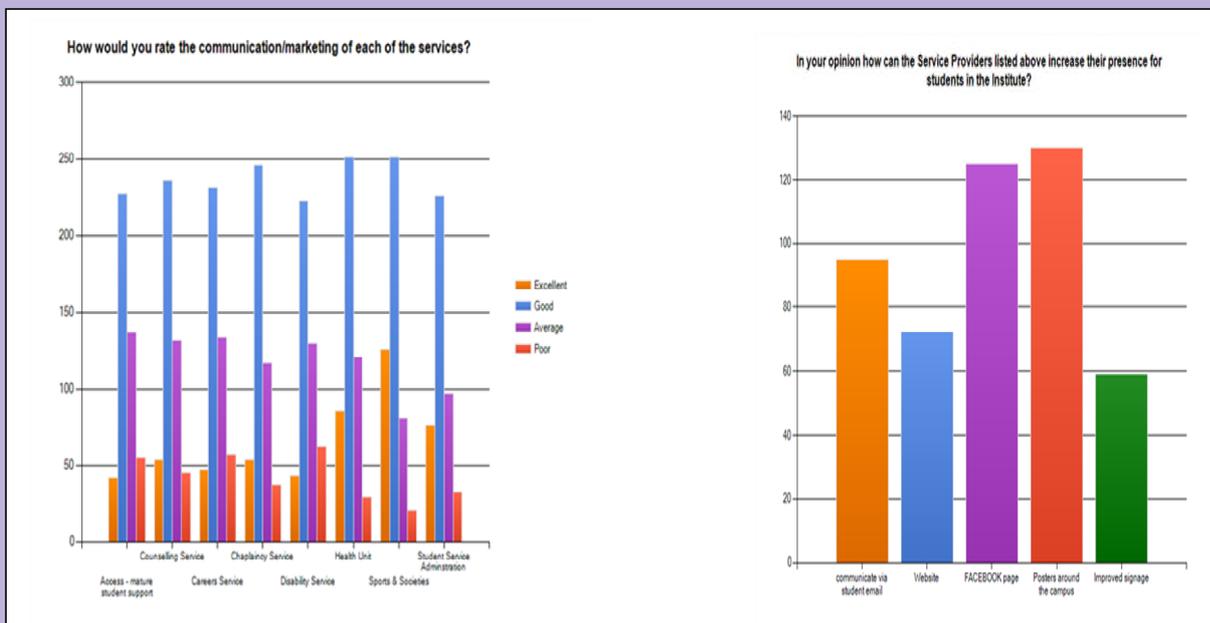


Figure 2: Communication/Marketing of the Support Services

Figure 3: How to increase awareness

The obvious observation from Figure 3 is that poster campaigns service to raise awareness more effectively.

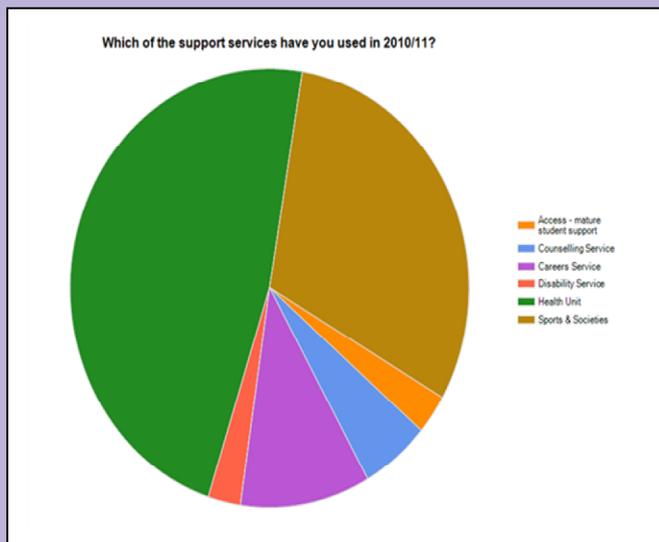


Figure 4: Usage of the Support Services

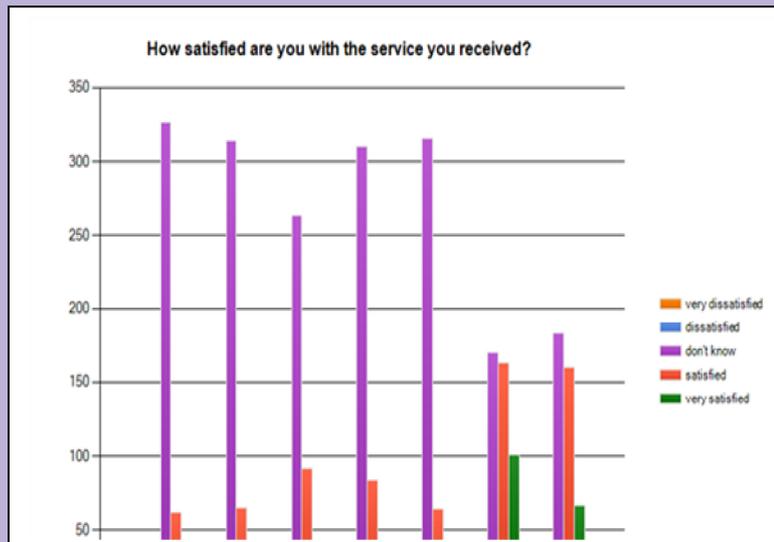


Figure 5: Satisfaction with Support Services

Findings are skewed by students rating support services they have not used. Generally in those that have availed of services the satisfaction level is good.

Below is a summary of some of the comments received when asked for additional information regarding satisfaction with the support services:

- Try to improve
- In order to make an appointment with the health unit you have to miss morning classes and miss class again in the evening to see the doc
- Gym equipment outdated
- The health unit are very helpful, friendly and supportive
- Its ok could be better
- Should maybe hire more nurses etc. because of long waiting ltime
- No proper queuing method available at health unit and too long waiting time for counselling
- Careers service need to reschedule cancelled appointments
- Chaplaincy service excellent 100%
- You should be able to book an appointment with Doctor for any time in day
- Better careers
- None of the services have been promoted in Carrolls Building
- Need to know more about careers
- Should be more interaction with class, one day of visits not enough
- Some of the clubs mentioned at the start of year did not run
- Student services very helpful
- Chaplaincy Service is confined to Catholicism
- Little/no effort made in Carrolls
- Nursing students unable to avail of Sports and societies with placement

