‘A Healthy MTU’

A Mixed Methods Baseline Needs Analysis to Empirically Inform a Campus Health Promotion Initiative within an Irish Higher Education Setting

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Context

Case HEI (former Cork Institute of Technology)
- Central campus
- 4 satellite campuses: Cork city and county
- CIT and ITT merger: MTU (Jan 1st 2021)

2014-2016
- Preliminary HP Operating Model: PG research student
- No designated HP role in case HEI

2016-Present (Dept. of Sport, Leisure & Childhood Studies)
- Designated programme of research
- International dissemination, expansion
- 3 x PhD, 1 x MSc, 18 UG
- >€305k external funding
- Regional UCC-MTU Healthy Campus Research Collaboration
High-Visibility Initiatives

Oisin McConville: 'I had no self-awareness, no maturity, no emotions, no feeling'

Former Armagh football star Oisin McConville detailed the impact his gambling addiction had on his playing days for an audience of students last week in Cork, saying he “was there but wasn’t really there” when Armagh won their historic All-Ireland title in 2002.
Baseline Programme of Research: Breadth and Scope

**Aim:** Empirically inform a multi-campus HP initiative ('A Healthy MTU')

### Phase One
Baseline Quantitative

- **Student/staff health metrics**
  - Cross-sectional
  - Web-based questionnaire instruments

#### (i) Students
- N=11,261
- 92 main items

#### (ii) Staff
- N=1,705
- 70 main items

### Phase Two
Transitional

- **Students and staff within case HEI**
  - Descriptive case study
  - Mixed methods

#### Student vs. staff comparisons
- Common items from Phase One
- Case HEI setting review
- Qualitative suggestions

### Phase Three
Qualitative

- **Lived experiences and Perceptions**
  - Qualitative

#### 34 student/staff stakeholders
- Interviews (n=16)
- Focus groups/dyads (n=18)

#### Analyses
- Thematic analysis
- Triangulation: determinants of health, campus HP principles

### Study One (students) (Ch 4)

### Study Two (staff) (Ch 5)

### Study Three (Ch 6)

### Study Four (Ch 7)

### Study Five (Ch 8)
Study One: Student Health and Wellbeing Dataset (Bickerdike et al., 2019)

Multi-domain quantitative dataset: n=2,267
- Student health and lifestyle parameters – establish the contemporary ‘state of play’
- Statistical modelling: identify predictors of positive mental health
Response demographics (n=279)

- Academic: 53.8%
- Clerical/Support/Other: 38.5%
- Management: 12.8%

Impact & applications
Alignment between health, wellbeing & ‘core-business’ metrics (perceived stress, absenteeism)
Study Three: Student/Staff Interactions with and within Setting

Not So Different After All! A Comparative Investigation into Student and Staff Health Metrics in an Irish Higher Education Setting

Mixed methods descriptive case study

Case HEI setting

Students  Staff

Student vs. Staff comparisons
A Qualitative Investigation into the Lived Experiences of Students and Staff within an Irish HEI, to Inform a Triangulated Model of the Determinants of Health

Key paradigm
- Whole-system perspective

Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991
Study Four: Student and Staff Insights

**Personal paradigms and perspectives:** Holism, challenges, inherent value on health

**People and relationships:**
Vocation, connection, role-modelling

“...good relationships with people you’re in class with and then with lecturers as well, it gets you to stay on campus longer because you enjoy your environment”
FG11, PG student

**Built environment:**
Lack of time to engage, paucity of healthy food options, no quiet or private space

“...some (distressed students during a panic attack) are like ‘yeah I sit in the toilet, on the ground of the accessible toilets’...we have no designated space for them, I think that’s an absolute disgrace”
IV07, PMSS

**Sectoral and organisational:**
Changed HE sector, stress, consuming workloads, T&L

“...the job is relentless, and it can be relentless, and it can take over your life”
FG08, Senior Management
Novel Contribution: Data-Driven Map and Model (Bickerdike, 2023)
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Study Five: Operational Structures

“...these are people issues, they’re not student and staff issues, they’re society issues, they are everybody”

Qualitative Perspectives of Students and Staff to Inform the Operational Structure of a Health Promotion Initiative within a Multi-Campus HEI in Ireland

Key Contributions to Literature
- Practice piece: campus HP rationale, drivers, and structures
- Operational road map to implement Healthy Campus Framework
Impact and Contributions

- Empirical evidence base, replicable methods
- Data-driven models to support health and wellbeing within HEIs
- Align with HEI ‘core-business’ and thematic research priorities
- Organisational and fiscal rationale for national longitudinal ‘Healthy Campus’ research strategy
Impact and Contributions

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Thank You

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