Contents

DCU in the Community - Our mission 2
Educational Programmes 3
Raising Aspirations 5
Volunteering and Community Based Learning 7
Civic Engagement 9
Our Team 11
DCU in the Community
– Our Mission

DCU in the Community acts as a bridge between the university and its local community.

Our mission is “to provide educational opportunities to local people in North Dublin in order to increase participation levels and to promote equality in third level education”. DCU in the Community has established itself as a leader in the area of civic engagement, promoting social regeneration through education. We strive to be an exemplar in flexible, community-based lifelong learning.

DCU in the Community recognises the individual talent of each student and offers a curriculum based on their needs and aspirations. We act as a ‘drop in centre’ for learners of all ages seeking information and advice in relation to accessing higher education options. We aim to promote sustainable community development and serve as a bridge between the resources of Dublin City University, the wider higher education system, and the local community.

Since 2010, DCU in the Community have delivered over 50 accredited and non-accredited learning programmes for over 900 community learners and adults returning to education. Additionally, over 900 hours of educational guidance and mentoring have been provided in that time. Since 2010, we have assisted with approximately 150 college applications for mature students and adult learners, significantly increasing the levels of participation in full time further and higher education in the local community. Finally, between 2010 and present approximately 350-400 DCU students from across all DCU Schools and Faculties have been linked with volunteering and service learning opportunities in the community.

2015-2016 in a Snapshot

• 140+ learners
• 170+ hours of educational guidance, student support and mentoring
• Assistance with 40+ applications to higher and further education
• 7 courses and programmes delivered on site
• 7 workshops delivered during Summer School 2016
• 100+ DCU student volunteers and service learners linked with local and national organisations
Educational Programmes

Overall, more than 140 learners participated in all courses and programmes at DCU in the Community in the academic year 2015/2016, including over 56 students who took up 105 workshop places during Summer School in July 2016.

Many of the programmes were held in partnership with local community organisations and statutory providers. The majority of our learners are mature students (over 23 years of age) from North Dublin areas with over 90% in receipt of social welfare benefits - many facing the challenge of being lone parents or long-term unemployed.

New for 2016/2017

As of September 2016 and January 2017, DCU in the Community will offer two new accredited programmes validated for delivery by QQI in spring 2016:

• QQI Level 5 Psychology
• QQI Level 6 Community Organisation Management
Bridge to Education

Our Bridge to Education programme is aimed at mature students and adult learners who wish to prepare to return to further and higher education. The programme is accredited at QQI Level 5. Areas of study include communications, academic reading and writing, numeracy and computer skills for college, research and study skills, as well as ongoing guidance. The programme is linked with DCU Campus through tours, guest workshops, speakers and events. In 2015/2016 the programme was delivered twice for over 30 students.

Over 60% of students graduating from Bridge to Education programmes in 2015/2016 secured places in higher and further education for September 2016.

Bridge to Education is delivered jointly with Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA) and Sillogue Neighbourhood Centre.

Summer School

Held since 2011, DCU in the Community Summer School is designed to bring university and community experts together to deliver sessions and workshops for local residents of all ages.

For DCU in the Community, it is an opportunity to reach new student groups and introduce them to our activities. In July 2016, 7 workshops were delivered in areas such as professional and personal development, public speaking, psychology, mindfulness, and sustainability.

DCU in the Community would like to acknowledge and thank DCU Schools and Units, as well as our community partners, whose contribution of valuable time and expertise made it possible to facilitate such successful Summer School programmes.

Over 100 workshop places were taken up in July 2016.

Creative Digital Media iMac

DCU in the Community strives to establish itself as a state of the art digital media hub. This interactive course is designed for learners who are interested in developing their digital media skills for personal and professional purposes.

Students gain knowledge of using iMac computers and Apple software and applications for creating and editing audio-visual materials, such as slideshows, movies and websites. The course introduces participants to the basics of working with software and applications such as Wix, Picasa, iMovie, Audacity and Google Tools.

In 2015/2016, the programme was delivered three times for over 30 learners many of whom are employees of local community groups and organisations.

Boxing Clever

Boxing Clever is a 20-week programme aimed to promote recovery and rehabilitation of marginalised and socially excluded groups through a framework of adult education, addiction awareness and education, counselling, guidance and physical activity (boxercise and boxing).

The programme is led by HSE RIS, Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force, Ballymun Youth Action Project and Urrús, and supported by DCC.

DCU in the Community has supported the delivery of the programme since 2012.

In 2015/2016, DCU in the Community supported over 20 programme participants through the provision of structured study skills and assignment preparation sessions and provided the venue for the QQI L4 Health-Related Fitness module.
Raising Aspirations
– Educational Guidance

DCU in the Community provides a range of pre-entry mentoring and support services for students enrolled on in-house courses as well as external clients, such as study support, educational guidance, application assistance, finance application assistance, interview preparation and more. In 2015/2016, over 170 hours of educational guidance, mentoring and study support were delivered.

In 2015/2016, DCU in the Community also provided one-to-one, hands-on assistance with completing 47 further and higher education applications to in-house students and external clients and a similar number of applications for student financial supports.

Campus events for our community students were also organised in 2015/2016, and included campus and library tours, guest workshops and seminars as well as the Graduation Ceremony in July 2016.
In December 2015, the new national online student volunteering management system, StudentVolunteer.ie, was launched at DCU by DCU SU President Kim Sweeney. DCU in the Community, on behalf of DCU and jointly with Campus Engage, University of Limerick and NUI Galway, co-led the development of the system since 2013. At the end of academic year 2015/2016, StudentVolunteer.ie partners included all seven Irish universities (DCU, TCD, UCD, NUIG, UL, MU, UCC) and two Institutes of Technology (IT Tralee and IT Tallaght) with more HEIs scheduled to join in the next academic year.

StudentVolunteer.ie allows community organisations to register, create and advertise local, national and international volunteering opportunities, and connect with and recruit student volunteers across Ireland. DCU students are able to browse and apply for opportunities they are interested in, connect with community based organisations, log and track their volunteering hours and apply for certificates at DCU.

The system aims to manage and promote the extensive contribution made by DCU and other higher education students to the local community, and nationally, through volunteering activity.

Volunteering Events and Activities
Student Volunteering in the Community: Results and Prospects report was launched in December 2015. The report is based on a survey of DCU student volunteers that DCU in the Community conducted with the support of DCU Students’ Union earlier in 2015. The publication includes the analysis of DCU student volunteers demographics,
their motivations for volunteering and barriers they experience, as well as ideas for creating an enabling volunteering structure and framework at Dublin City University. The report also assesses the economic value of DCU student volunteering activity. The results of the publication were circulated internally at DCU and among community and voluntary organisations, and presented at a Volunteering Symposium at NUI Galway in June 2016. For the full report, and other DCU in the Community publications, please see: www.dcu.ie/community/publications.shtml

DCU in the Community, jointly with DCU Volunteering Committee and DCUSU, co-organised the DCU Volunteer Expo held in October 2015, with 45 community, charity and voluntary organisations in attendance to promote engagement opportunities for university students. It was estimated that approximately 1,500 visitors attended the Expo.

DCU in the Community has also been developing and maintaining the DCU Volunteering online presence through Facebook and Twitter accounts. To further promote volunteering among DCU students, DCU in the Community has designed the DCU Student Volunteer Handbook which was included in orientation packs for all new incoming DCU students in September 2015.

In 2015/2016 over 100 DCU student volunteering and service learning placements were facilitated by DCU in the Community and StudentVolunteer.ie with many being on local social projects in Ballymun. DCU in the Community continuously worked to develop and further consolidate links with community and voluntary organisations interested in involving DCU students.
Civic Engagement

DCU President’s Awards for Engagement
The President, Professor Brian Mac Craith, announced the winners at the President’s Award for Engagement 2016 ceremony held in the Helix on 25th April with over 120 attendees.

A record number of applications for the Awards were received in 2016 both in staff and student category.

Winners:

• **Student Category:** DCU Raising and Giving Society – Local Community Projects

• **Staff Category:** Bernadette Dwyer, Institute of Education, St. Patrick’s College – Chekhov E-book Lit4Life Project

• **Special Merit Award (Student):** Cody Byrne – Outstanding Individual Contribution: Global Brigades

• **Special Merit Award (Staff):** Vincent Hooper and Brian Kelleher, School of Chemical Science, DCU – Teach to Learn and Science Promotion Collaboration with Trinity Comprehensive School, Ballymun

• **Special Award in Enterprise Engagement:** Michael Henry – Special Recognition for Enterprise Engagement – Novel LC-MS-MS-Workflow for Proteomic Profiling of Biological Samples

For details of the winning projects and a full list of nominees please see: www.dcu.ie/community/publications.shtml

Civic Engagement Forum
DCU in the Community staff are active members of the university’s Civic Engagement Forum, chaired by Dr Deiric O’Broin (NorDubCo). Members of the forum include representatives from schools, faculties and administrative units, as well as DCU Student Union, who act as champions of civic engagement in their respective units and university-wide.

DCU Links
Throughout 2015/2016, DCU in the Community continued to work with DCU Faculties, Schools and Administrative units in the field of service learning, volunteer and research placements, as well as increasing the university’s community outreach activities and projects. One of the projects included the promotion of community-based learning as a pedagogy through workshops offered to DCU staff in February and March 2015.

Campus Engage
DCU Office of Civic Engagement and DCU in the Community continue to work on Campus Engage Steering Committee and Campus Engage Volunteering and Student-Led Engagement Working Group.

Research Publications
The DCU in the Community Papers series addresses issues of concern to the community where a research perspective can be translated into practical action. It seeks to engage with critical thinking—from wherever it might emerge—and promote empowerment through research. In 2015/2016 the following paper has been published:

• **Student Volunteering in the Community – Results and Prospects** (Ailbhe Garvey, Rachel Cook, Lisa O’Quinn, Joanna Ozarowska)
Our Team

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Community Employment, Internships and Work Experience

Ruth Lynam, DCU Communication Studies, DCU Volunteer Champion Internship (July 2016 – present)
Lara Roche, DCU Multimedia, DCU Volunteer Champion Internship (July 2016 – present)
Ann Byrne, DCU Community Employment Scheme, Receptionist and Administrator (May – July 2016)
Paul Tuke, Colaiste Dhulaigh, IT Support, Work Experience/Student Placement (February 2016)