

**Title:**                   **Establishing and maintaining Authentic Student-Staff partnerships in Higher Education**

**Presenter:**           Morag Munro, Nicole Carr, Eddie Corr, Karla Doyle, Susan Gottlöber, Sabrina Marwede, Robyn Meyler Katharina Kurz, Michaela Waters, Julian Nagi  
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### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Understand the benefits of establishing and maintaining authentic student-staff partnerships in Higher Education
- Identify the defining features of authentic student-staff partnerships
- Identify strategies for fostering authentic student-staff partnerships relevant to their own context

### **Outline**

Cook-Sather, Bovill & Felton, (2014, pp. 6-7) define effective student-staff partnership as "a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the same opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualisation, decision making, implementation, investigation, or analysis". Authentic student-staff partnerships can generate valuable insights and learning opportunities for all involved, and can contribute to enhanced student engagement. However authentic partnerships can be challenging to establish and maintain (Cook-Sather, Bovill & Felton, 2014).

In this workshop, delivered by students and staff, participants will discuss and reflect on strategies for establishing and maintaining authentic student-staff partnerships in Higher Education. Following a discussion of the benefits, features and challenges of authentic student-staff partnerships, we will share lessons learned so far from a student-staff partnership initiated between students and staff at Maynooth University and Maynooth Students' Union. Our partnership was established via the [Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning \(EDTL\)](#) in Irish Universities project, which aims to enhance the digital attributes and educational experiences of Irish university students. We will share some of the projects, resources and supports that we have worked on and developed so far, including a Student Digital Skills resource, 'created by students for students', student-led staff workshops and resources. Several student-driven social media campaigns have also been initiated, aimed at supporting students in the context of the rapid pivot to online learning due to COVID-19; promoting student engagement with Business News & Information; and promoting academic integrity.

## **Activities and Approximate Timings**

### ***Introduction to Authentic Student-staff Partnerships (20 minutes)***

Following a short contextual introduction to student-staff partnerships (5 minutes) workshop participants will be invited to reflect on and discuss the meaning of authenticity in the context of student-staff partnerships, as well as to reflect on and share their perspectives on the benefits and challenges associated with such partnerships (15 minutes).

### ***Strategies for fostering authentic student-staff partnerships (20 minutes)***

Strategies for fostering authentic student-staff partnerships will be shared (10 minutes), with reference both the literature on this topic and to the approaches undertaken at our institution. Participants will be supported to reflect on these approaches, to share their own examples, and to consider how they might be applied to or adapted to their own context (10 minutes).

## **References and sources**

Cook-Sather, A., Bovill, C. and Felten, P. (2014) *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching: A Guide for Faculty*. Jossey Bass: San Francisco.