



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF DUBLIN

Student Counselling Service

Annual Report 2011-2012



www.tcd.ie/student_counselling

www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/student-learning

<http://student2student.tcd.ie>

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Executive Summary

- A minimum of **3,571 unique students (21% of TCD student body) received services.**
 - **5,853 counselling appointments were attended by 1,304 students**, an increase of 0.8% of the student body from 2010-11.
 - **Student Learning Development directly supported 913 students (5.4% of TCD, over 1% more than 2010-11).** SLD also delivered workshops within individual schools to 2,197 students not included in the 913 figure.
 - The **Student-2-Student programme further expanded by nearly 30% to involve 2,190 students** in peer mentoring for Junior Freshman.

- **Annual feedback survey results were once again very positive** (*see appendix for samples*).
 - 87% of counselling clients giving feedback reported positive change in their presenting problems, and 30% felt that counselling was either an important factor or the most important factor in keeping them enrolled at Trinity. 45% felt counselling was an important or the most important factor in helping them gain life skills applicable to future employment.
 - The retention rate of students attending SLD one-to-one and workshop supports increased by nearly 1% to over 95%; and 88% of feedback from students receiving one-to-one SLD reported a positive change in their presenting issues. SLD workshops were rated 4 out of 5 by over 500 students for usefulness.
 - Junior Freshman using the S2S peer mentoring programme rated it highly and provided constructive suggestions for future development.

- **Responding to large numbers of counselling and subsequent long waiting lists at two points in the year, College/The C.O.O. allocated resources to service the demand.** This was appreciated by both students and staff. One sign of appreciation was a sharp drop in the percentage of negative feedback comments regarding appointment resources on the annual survey. Consistently 25% in previous years, this figure dropped to 13% of all comments.

- **A service-level agreement was signed in October 2011 with The Marino Institute of Education** to provide counselling and learning support to their students through the South Leinster Street

offices. This reflects “collaboration, sharing and pooling of resources” as advocated in the [National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030](#) (p 119).

- **S2S expanded to include the School of Engineering and the School of Computer Science & Statistics in the Peer Mentoring Programme for incoming Junior Freshman, and also improved services through several key innovations:** forming mentor teams within schools, training mentors to deliver basic study skills talks, developing systems for better recording mentor activities, and The Parlour Project – creating a recreational space on campus focussed on mental health and wellbeing.
- Despite being short-staffed for a portion of the year due to a combination of un-replaced maternity leave and a career break, **SLD succeeded in increasing its student contacts in all areas**, including one-to-one, workshops, and outreach programmes to schools.
- **Plans for 2012-13** include: (1) A review of administrative systems will be undertaken and will inform practical changes to assist the Admin Team in supporting three services, all of which have grown year-on-year. (2) The service will continue to collaborate with TCD I.S. Services to deliver the “Web Component” enabling students to register and take screening measures electronically. (3) Subject to testing, the My Mind Matters online counselling site will go live for student use. Inter-university governance structures need to be agreed for this project. (4) The S2S programme will offer mentoring to all Junior Freshman and Erasmus/visiting students. (5) SLD will continue to improve its usage of I.T. to deliver learning support, including use of TCD Blackboard. (6) New volunteers for the Critical Incident Psychological Response Team (CIPR Team) will be recruited from within the College Community and trained by the counselling team.
- **Risks: To ensure the continuity of the now well-established S2S programme**, the coordinator’s contract must be renewed by May 2013. Online counselling via the **My Mind Matters** mental health portal **requires funding for testing and maintenance** before final roll-out. An on-going risk is that unforeseen staff absences (e.g., due to illness or un-replaced maternity leave) could result in significant quality issues, such as long waiting lists. Finally, as 10% of all non-E.U. students attended counselling and 10.3% attended learning support in 2011-12 (compared to 6.8% and 4.3% of Irish students respectively), **Global Relations Strategy recruitment targets** in this area **remain a serious concern**.

Review of the Year 2011-12

Overview

3,571 Unique Students received services (Min. estimate, no duplicates)
(21% of TCD Students)

Counselling

1,304 Clients (7.7% of TCD)
5,853 appointments attended

SLD

913 Clients & **2,197** outreach
programme contacts
3,563 student contacts

S2S

2,190 participants
- 2,033 Mentees
- 157 volunteer mentors

21% is a conservative estimate for uptake of services as it excludes students who did not register with the Service, such as S2S mentees and SLD outreach programme participants. “Clients” indicates unique students, while “contacts” refers to the number of attendances rather than unique students and may include overlaps.

Administrative Team

The Admin Team delivered several key initiatives in 2011-12, including:

- Redesigning a more accessible and user-friendly [website](#)
- Teaming with Trinity I.S. Services to implement Sharepoint technology for the whole service, enabling more efficient collaboration on service documents.
- Successfully appointing a replacement Executive Officer in March
- Organising community agencies Console and Bodywhys to provide in-house support groups for students, thanks to the generous support of TCD Alumni through the *Trinity Annual Fund*.

Counselling

Summary of counselling activities

5,853 counselling appointments attended , of which:

- 4,508 One-to-one
- 684 Group,
- 661 Online

1,304 Students received counselling supports:

1,209 face-to-face clients,
171 online clients,
76 used both

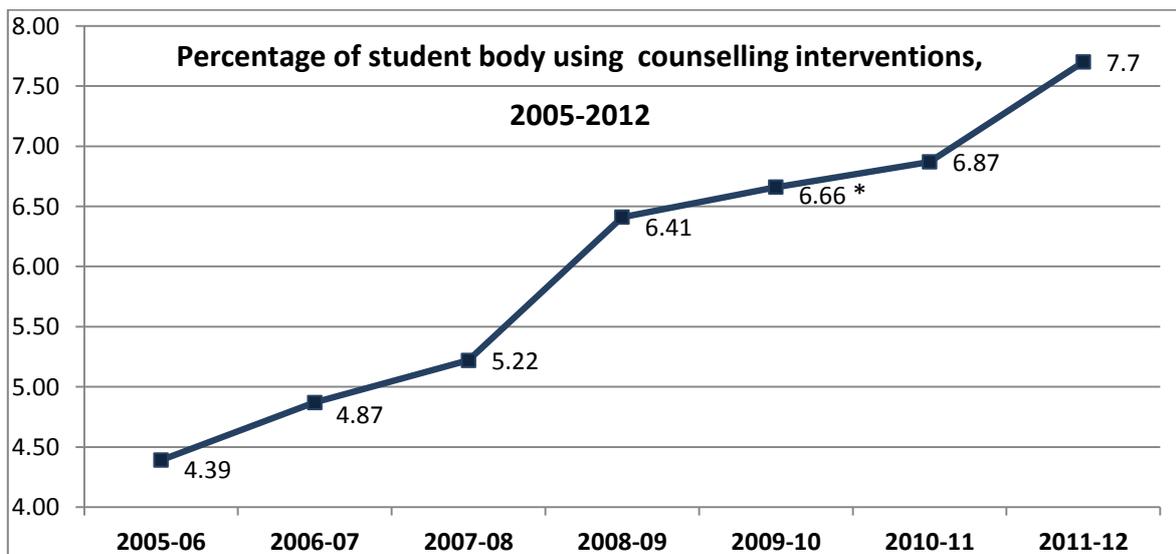
1,887 case management tasks completed

173 client & non-client queries handled

4.5 sessions/student average
IRL Benchmark = 4.8
UK = 4.7 (Russell)
USA = 6.2

20% of all **Mature Students (SD)** &
17% of all **Students Registered with Disabilities** rec'd counselling

Nearly 8% of the student body received counselling supports. This figure grows annually and is consistent with the USA average of 10.4%. The figure below details the increase in service users since 2005.



* From 2009, this figure includes individual, group, and online clients, made possible by the introduction of the new client database in 2009-10.

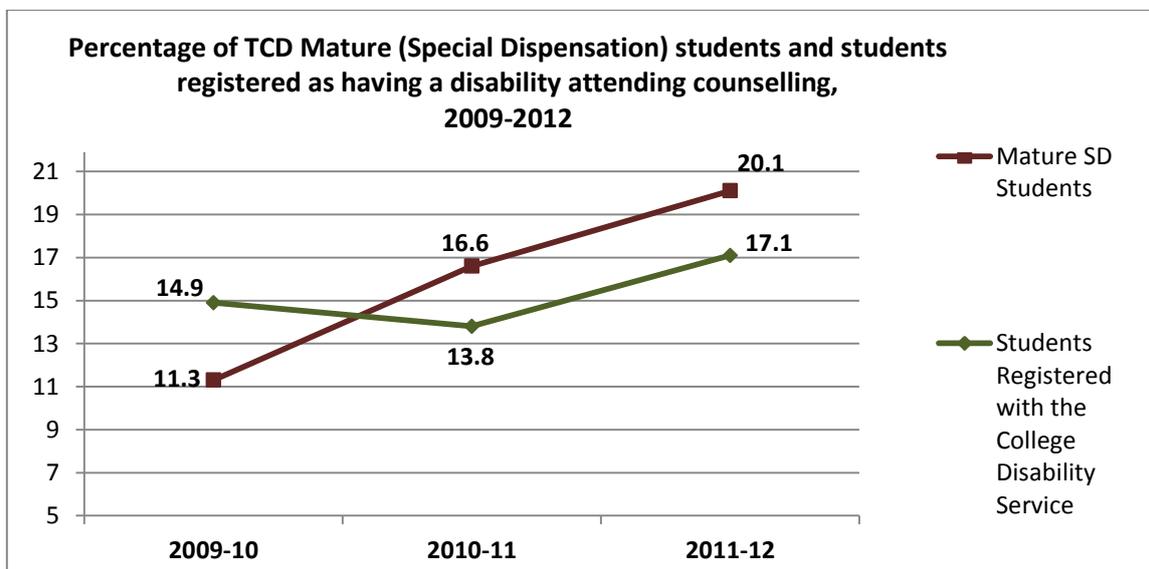
Access to Services

To facilitate access to the Service for new clients, the service remained open during the 1-2 p.m. lunch hour each day during term time to provide brief drop-in consultations. **A total of 198 brief consults occurred**, keeping the average wait time low despite the higher volume of appointment requests. As in previous years, it was not always possible to offer an initial appointment during periods of peak demand within the best practice target of 2 weeks.

Counselling clients were proportionately represented across academic year, faculty, and by undergraduate/postgraduate standing. Male students were slightly underrepresented this year (41% of TCD vs. 34% of counselling clients).

Non-traditional students

12.5% of TCD's non-traditional students (including mature students, students with disabilities, HEAR/Access students, and non-E.U. students) attended counselling compared to 6.6% of "traditional" students. The graph below illustrates how mature students and students with disabilities attend counselling in increasingly larger proportion.



1 in every 10 non-E.U. students at TCD attended counselling (vs. 6.8% of all Irish students, 8.2% of all E.U. students). The higher referral rates of non-traditional and international students remains a

concern as College aims to increase enrolment in both areas. It is imperative that resources to meet increased demand for services are agreed as soon as possible.

Student issues

Anxiety and depression issues remained the top two problem categories into which student concerns fell, with over **60% of clients citing anxiety-related problems** and **57% citing depression and mood problems**. 7.3% of all counselling clients indicated experiencing personal safety issues, such as suicidal thoughts or behaviours, deliberate self-harm and high-risk behaviours. The service provides daily emergency appointments and collaborates closely with the College Health Service to support students “at risk.” 197 emergency appointments were attended, a 16.5% increase on emergencies in 2010-11. Student performance remains significantly affected by mental health issues, with over 58% of counselling clients reporting that their problems negatively impact on their studies, and 10% indicating high or very-high risk of dropping out of College at their first counselling appointment. In addition to routine counselling work, SCS counsellors responded to a number of crisis situations in College, serving 76 students and staff (not logged as unique clients in the database).

Innovations

- Following a successful pilot, lunchtime opening with drop-in access to brief consultations for new clients was extended throughout the year (term time).
- A service-level agreement was signed with The Marino Institute of Education to provide counselling and learning support to their student body.
- Our collaboration with Silver Cloud Health continued as we were able to offer all students the chance to use their online mental health programmes *Mind Balance* and *See Myself*.

Feedback on counselling

A large number of counselling clients completed the feedback questionnaire – **604 partial replies and 570 full replies** (approximately 45% of all clients). Of these, **87% reported positive change in the problems they initially brought to counselling** (28% “improved greatly”). Results for questions about counselling’s impact on key areas are summarised in the following table. These feedback questions are taken directly from an on-going research project by the British Association of Counsellors & Psychotherapists Division of University and College Counselling. In the future, we will be able to benchmark ourselves in these feedback areas against a large sample of UK data.

To what extent would you say...	The most significant factor	An important factor	One of many factors
Counselling has helped you to stay at College?	5.4%	24.1%	21.5%
Counselling has helped you do better in your academic work?	8.1%	26.9%	21.1%
Counselling has improved your overall experience of College?	5.6%	37.5%	30.3%
Counselling has helped you develop skills that might be useful in obtaining future employment?	11.1%	34.2%	25.4%

(Remaining response choices were: “To a limited extent” “Not at all” or “This was not an issue for me.”)

400 students gave qualitative feedback, containing 680 different comments. **64% of these comments praised the service and its new location**, 12% offered suggestions for improvement, 11% were critical of the service, and 13% voiced specific dissatisfaction with appointment resources, such as the time between appointments and the service’s 8-session limit. **The latter figure is a sharp improvement from a consistent 25% annual rate of negative feedback on appointment resources.** We hypothesise that this marked drop to 13% is due not only to innovative service delivery but to College’s commitment to resourcing the Service in times when demand peaked (e.g. providing sessional counselling budgets), and suggests that students experienced College as more responsive to their counselling needs in 2011-12. The Service target for future feedback is 5% dissatisfaction in this area.

Clinical Outcomes

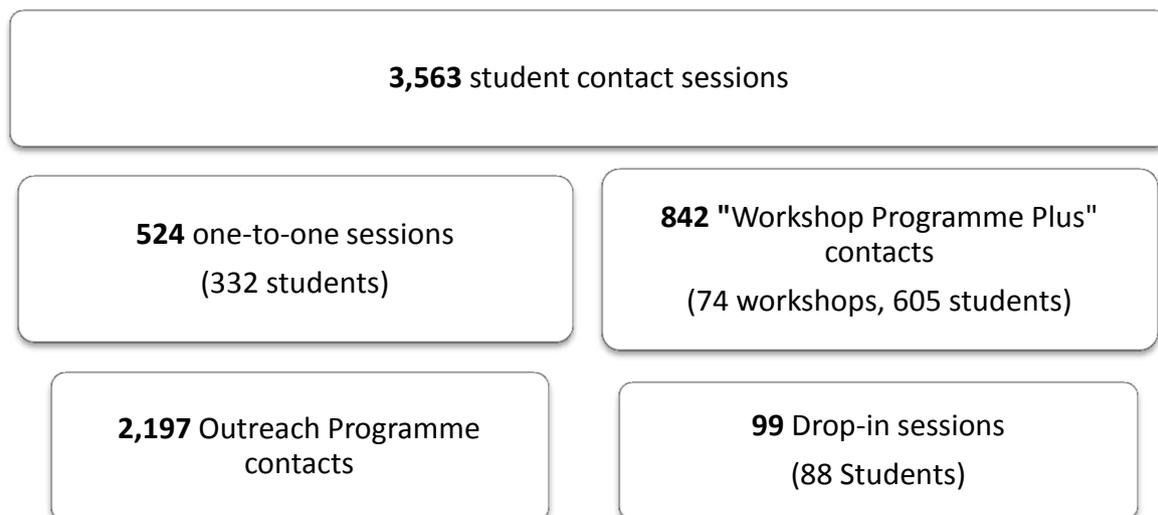
609 clients completed a psychometric at their first appointment (the Outcome Rating Scale), with returning clients completing it at every subsequent session. **86% of clients scored in the “clinical” range at intake** (indicating lower levels of well-being). Of those who had further sessions, **54% reached their target outcome score** on the measure. 360 clients completed the Session Rating Scale (SRS) after each appointment, allowing them to provide satisfaction scores for their

counselling appointments. **Clients gave an average SRS score of 35.5/40 for all sessions.** An individual client's ratings are used in collaboration with their counsellor to help shape the service received.

Student Learning Development

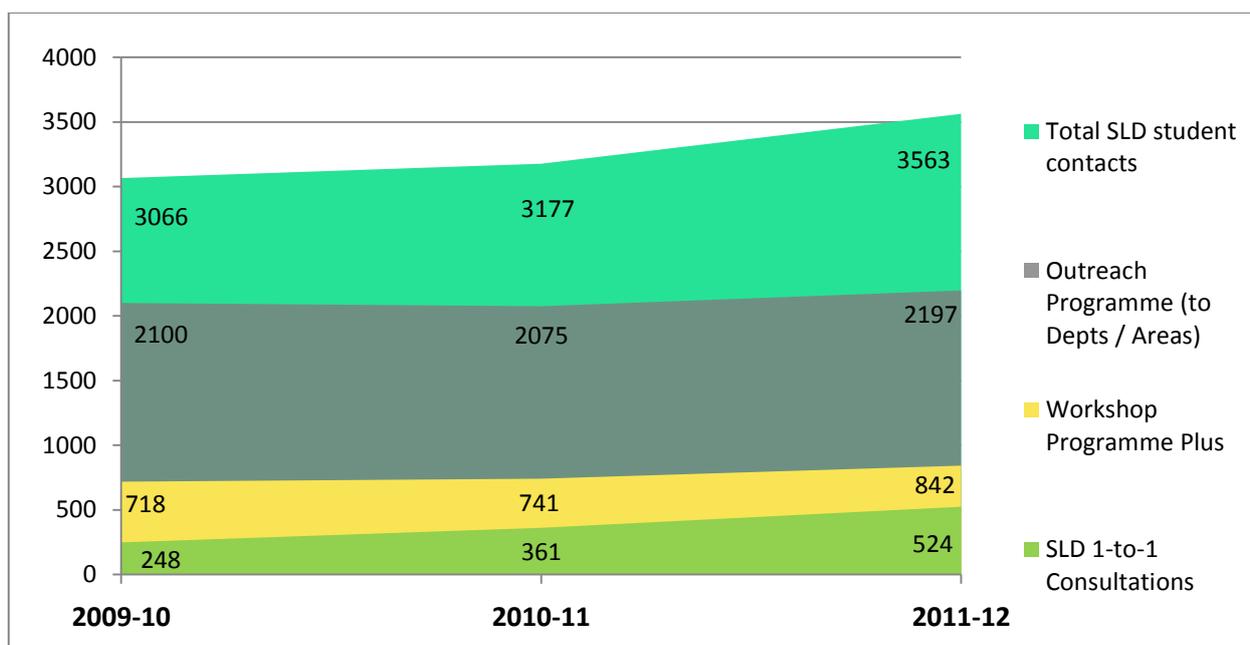


Summary of SLD activities



SLD staff delivered 3,563 student contacts through face-to-face and group/workshop support. 913 unique students were counted in the database for one-to-one and Workshop Plus services (5.4% of TCD), where the Outreach Programme students may be counted more than once. In addition, SLD responded to approximately 600 email queries and provided **web-based self-help, which received 90,216 page views** from 21,843 unique visitors. One-to-one learning support sessions include both drop-ins (99) and scheduled appointments (425).

SLD Contact Trend, 2009-2012



Each category in the figure above shows the number of contact sessions rather than the number of students attending. It clearly shows that SLD has maintained a high level of service provision despite being on reduced staffing numbers over the past 3 years due to staff leave (career break, maternity). SLD has worked to increase provision in all areas, focussing special attention on embedding workshops in departments (Outreach Programme), and in increasing one-to-one supports through the new drop-in facility.

International Students

As with counselling, over 10% of all non-E.U. students accessed learning support (10.3% actual), compared to 4.3% of Irish students. This underscores previous evidence that international students often have greater support needs, and highlights the need to put appropriate resources in place for projected growth in recruitment targets.

Retention

A retention rate was calculated by collecting information on student standing for 2011-2012 (in Hilary Term) for clients who attended during 2010-2011. A combined retention rate of 95.5% was achieved by students who engaged with SLD for one-to-one or central workshop supports (increase of nearly 1% from 09-10). While retention and progression are multifactorial, the figure of 95% seems to support SLD's value to students.

Innovations

- Learning support services throughout TCD, including SLD, were externally reviewed in June 2011. A key recommendation is the appointment of a College Student Learning Development Coordinator. Additional funding is required for this.
- Drop-in learning support usage went from 35 in its first year to 88 in its second year.

Feedback on SLD

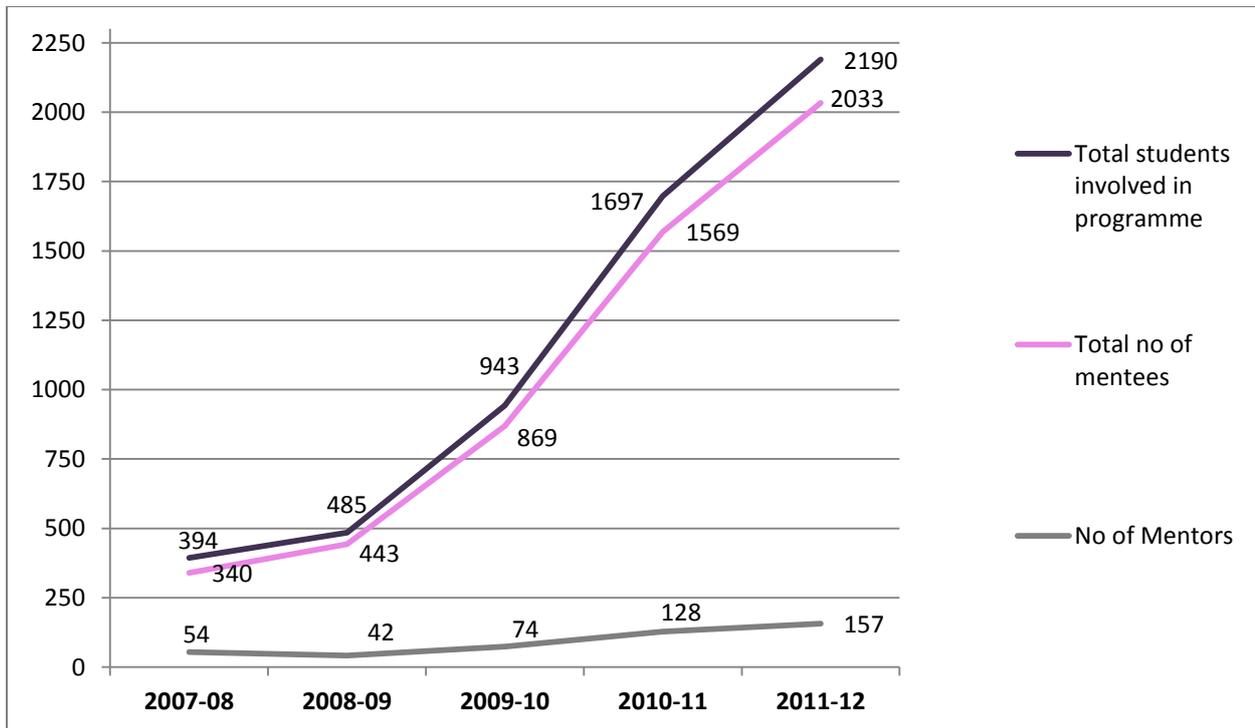
52 students responded to a feedback survey (16% response rate from 1-to-1 clients). 88% said that the issues they sought help for had improved, and 78% indicated that SLD helped them perform better academically. 38% said that SLD was a factor in their retention. 542 students provided feedback on workshops, with over 90% indicating belief that the input would help improve their academic performance. Students gave an overall rating of 4.1 out of 5.

Student-2-Student (S2S)

Summary of S2S activities



Peer Mentoring Programme, 2007-2012



S2S uses the social capital of the student community to: (1) ease the transition and improve the retention of new students via the Peer Mentoring Programme (which matches newly arrived JF students with SF, JS, and SS volunteers to aid their transition to TCD) and (2) improve the mental

health of the student body through outreach, education and creative programming. S2S operated with 2.4 FTE staff during the year, including a full-time S2S Coordinator, a JobBridge intern, who was tasked specifically with an analysis of mentoring provisions in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, and a European Volunteer Scheme (EVS) volunteer funded by Youth In Action, who assisted with the administration of the S2S programme.

Volunteer mentors received training prior to Fresher's Week (10 training sessions total). A range of mentoring services was then provided to JF students, including an initial orientation meeting, follow-up social events, and on-going communication throughout the first semester. All JF students from participating schools were matched with volunteers and given the opportunity to receive mentoring services. College-wide JF mentoring coverage is planned for 2012-13.

Innovations

The peer mentor programme expanded to include the School of Computer Science and Statistics and the School of Engineering.

In order to maintain communication between the S2S Office and a rapidly expanding body of volunteers Head Mentor roles were created and filled from within the volunteer cohort. Head Mentors act as a first point of communication for all mentors within each school/area and report back directly to the S2S co-ordinator at monthly meetings.

A shared Google calendar was also set up for volunteers to log their individual activity and to share information about upcoming meet-ups and events with other S2S mentors.

To meet requests from JF students for academic assistance, S2S and SLD jointly trained peer mentors to deliver workshops in time management and exam taking skills.

In February 2012 S2S hosted the first national Peer Mentoring and Peer Support conference on behalf of the Confederation of Student Services Ireland. The S2S Coordinator was asked to Chair the Special Interest Group in 2012-13.

It was agreed to run annual peer support training over one week at the beginning of June 2013, and mandates were secured within SU Council for the SU Welfare Officer and SU Education Officer to attend peer support training in order to take up their role as sabbatical officers of the College.

Finally, S2S undertook The Parlour Project - a collaboration with the JCR , the SU and GSU - to establish a student-led well-being and relaxation space on campus. This project was awarded funding by the TCD Equality Fund and was scheduled for launch in September 2012.

Feedback on S2S

An electronic survey was sent to all JF students matched with mentors. 262 students responded (~14%). Most respondents reported feeling the programme was valuable. Key constructive feedback included:

- More assistance with study methods
- Ensuring mentors continue to engage first years following orientation
- Booklets at orientation explaining the S2S programme

Plans for 2012-13

The planning cycle for all three services commences in May with a review of service levels and student feedback and concludes in September when final analyses are complete. Based on the 2011-12 review the following plans have been made for 2012-13.

Admin Team Plans

The service has grown exponentially in recent years and the Administrative Team has worked tirelessly to keep pace. However, the Admin Team has naturally come under greater pressure as increasing demand for services, greater diversity of staff, and broadening of service delivery have widened their remit without additional admin resources. A full review of current administrative systems is thus planned to improve the efficiency of the admin function. The review will focus particularly on policies and procedures, resource levels and resource allocation.

Improved security and backup testing for the Titanium Schedule database been undertaken by TCD I.S. Services from 2010-12 and will conclude with the **introduction of a new “Web Component,” allowing students to register electronically** from inside the Service’s waiting area. This will also

enable a critical standardised screening measure for counselling clients utilising free software embedded in the Titanium database, which many college counselling services in the USA use to assess risk and benchmark their work.

Counselling plans

The programme to offer group supports to TCD students facilitated by external agencies will continue to expand and will include Bodywhys (Eating Disorder support), Aware (targeting depression), OCD Ireland, and Console (support for suicide bereavement).

Funding was obtained early in 2012-13 from College for **a training post, making it possible to increase appointment availability by hiring an intern psychologist/counsellor**. It is the Service's hope that this post can continue to be offered on an annual basis.

The Critical Incident Psychological Response Team (CIPR Team), organised by the counselling team, **will recruit and train additional volunteers** from within the College Community. Exercises to facilitate crisis-preparedness will also be coordinated.

Current online counselling programmes will remain available to students. **Contingent on security testing, the newly-developed My Mind Matters (mymindmatters.ie) online counselling site will go live**, offering broader access to one-to-one online counselling. **E-Pub**, an online resource promoting healthy drink behaviours, will be rolled-out in 2012-13

SLD plans

A full-time Learning Support and Development Officer will return from career break in December and will take over coordinating the SLD Team.

The SLD Team will **continue to increase the availability of learning support resources** in various electronic formats, as well as the I.T. skills of the team itself. It is planned to leverage the TCD Blackboard system for improving service accessibility.

SLD will liaise with the directors of teaching and learning and other relevant stakeholders with a view to greater embedding of programmes throughout academic departments and schools.

S2S plans

In 2012-13 **the S2S mentor programme will be delivered to every full-time undergraduate honours course in the College as well as to Erasmus/Visiting students** in both Michaelmas and Hilary term. S2S will also liaise more closely with the International Office and with Global Relations to improve the support available to international students and to organise campus-wide cross-cultural events.

The Peer Support Programme will increase in size and will be more heavily promoted across campus. Access to this service will be enhanced by Parlour facilitation and a drop-in service run by Peer Supporters.

More regular feedback from the students accessing S2S services will be encouraged in the Parlour space, via the revised website and through an additional survey in Michaelmas Term. Mentors will also be encouraged to set up Facebook groups for their mentees as an alternative to TCD email communication.

The Head Mentor system will be strengthened by additional training for the S2S volunteers and more frequent (fortnightly) meetings with the co-ordinator.

S2S volunteers will be given support and resources to run their own training sessions for fellow students including SLD workshops, positive mental health competitions, and Queer & Ally training with QSoc.

Risks

High Risks

The S2S programme will be discontinued if the coordinator's contract is not approved by May 2013. In the past 3 years S2S has gone from supporting under 500 students to being poised to reach all incoming Junior Freshman students in 2012-13. It has served well in accomplishing key College objectives like Objective 4.9: Ease the transition of new students into full membership of the College community, and Objective 4.7: Enhance and extend student support services. Without funding S2S risks complete discontinuation.

The My Mind Matters online counselling site risks being lost if a funding stream cannot be found for security testing and annual usage fees. The importance of an online service to a student population cannot be underestimated, and continuation of these services is a key strategic goal. Inter-university agreement re: governance structures and costs is required for the continuation of this service.

The Service has a relatively small staff embodying considerable corporate wisdom and expertise in the area of student support. **The loss of key personnel, such as to illness or non-replaced maternity cover would result in increased waiting times and waiting lists.** Due to inexperience in managing crises and the potential risks this involves, young adults require quick access to services.

Medium Risks

An inability to respond to international students' counselling, learning support and peer support needs poses a serious reputational risk for College, which could negatively affect recruitment targets. Increases in international (non-EU) student enrolment through the Global Relations Strategy can only be sustainable with commensurate service resources. At present, the numbers of non-EU students seeking counselling and learning support has increased steadily to 1 in every 10 in 2011-12 vs. 6.8% of Irish students (4.3% for learning support).

Appendix 1: Qualitative feedback from students, 2011-12

Sample Counselling comments:

Excellent service, helped me a lot. Glad to know it's there.

Personally I found the counselling service to be of great benefit in helping me deal with personal issues which in turn greatly assisted me in staying in college. I'm not sure if I would have remained in college if the counselling services weren't available.

My nervousness of first attending the service were immediately gotten rid of by the very friendly, and excellently non-patronising reception staff. I have never felt more welcome to an area. The reception area itself is well laid out. I likely would have been too nervous to come back and attend the appointment that I had booked, if it were not for the reception staff.

I have no complaints whatsoever about the service - it has been a huge help to me and continues to be. The staff, location and organisation are excellent, as is the Silver Cloud service.

Thought the staff were very friendly and understanding of my issues, and always came across as considerate and caring. Although I understand there is huge demand placed on the service, the ability to have weekly appointments, or more than 8 total appointments would be of huge benefit to those dealing with long term issues.

The service is excellent. I have used it during the 3 years that I have been at college. There was some relaxation sessions this year that were given as part of the service, and I think that that they were quite useful...I think that it is an excellent way to help those who like me, have anxiety and panic attack issues... I have to say that had not been for the help of the counselling services, the college doctor and the physio, I would have given up college in my second year, and never come back to my third.

I utilised the online forum- which then opened the way to counselling sessions, without this I would probably not have made contact with SCS. I found SCS incredibly useful. Thanks so much.

This has been an essential service without which the quality of my life would have been greatly lessened.

The counselling helped me in my communication issues. I am rather isolated, and the SCS has provided me with the support I needed. Their friendliness and patience have been very helpful. The new building is friendly and welcoming. It's nice that the radio is on in the waiting area and there are newspapers and magazines providing a relaxed environment. The counsellor I have been

seeing is calm, warm and has a fantastic listening technique, which repeats and affirms what I have said. She has helped me greatly. The online resources have also been extremely helpful. I feel it is a service that needs more resources. I found it difficult to get appointments and this was due to the amount of students accessing the service. I was happy with the sessions. It was scheduling in appointments as they are so busy was the problem.

Brilliant service ... counsellor is excellent, professional and genuinely concerned with me. Very much appreciate this service being available in TCD. It has been one of the most significant parts of my time in TCD.

It'd be great if people could make appointments online and have greater say over who they see when they make an appointment.

I am currently engaging in online counselling. It's very effective and the perfect option for me. I'm very glad the college offers it as a service.

All good! Thanks :) I think the emergency counselling option is great as it helps in a more acute sense.

The service was absolutely fantastic. Always making me feel completely at ease as I was very unsure of attending the service in the first place. It helped me so much in getting through what has been a very tough year for me. There is nothing you can do to improve. It's fantastic. Thank you so much and well done.

Have found it really helpful in a really stressful period, the willingness to accommodate me in an emergency was invaluable to my experience.

The facilities for mental health services at TCD are fantastic as is the level of mental health awareness

As a PhD student, I feel very isolated when I have problems with the work. My supervisor is the only sort of pastoral care provided by the university, and the only person I really deal with, and I'd rather not tell him all my problems. So I am grateful for the one-to-one counselling at the SCS. I've found the advice I've received helpful and reassuring. I would highly recommend every new PhD student have a one-to-one with a counsellor there so they know what's available. If I were starting all over again, I would have made contact sooner.

I found the Service very helpful and accommodating. I got seen to very quickly and was put on an emergency waiting list for my second appointment. My counsellor was friendly and understanding, but most importantly, she gave me practical advice to address my problems independently.

I really felt like I had no one to talk to and like even staying focused on a hour long lecture was too much for me, never mind my final year project and exams, but by attending the counselling service I felt less trapped and like I could get on with my college life. It was a huge help, thanks so much for the great work.

I attended the Console group therapy sessions. I found it to be welcoming and with time I was eased into a comfortable environment in which I was able to share.

I feel I am truly listened to, and cared about, and that the feedback, advice, comments, whatever you would like to call them, I am given are wise and helpful and professional, insightful and kind. I do wish there wasn't the normal limit to maximum amount of sessions. Some people need more help than that.

I found that the counselling was very good, but I did wish that I could have set up more appointments with the counsellors and that they weren't limited.

I found the drop-in service extremely helpful, much more so than expected.

Sample SLD comments:

I received very important guidance with writing. It was very specifically relevant to my problem. I was guided to explore and clarify my ideas. I liked the confidentiality of the meeting, the office space, access to internet in the room.

I had an appointment to help with planning and self-management. I found it very useful. The reception staff were very friendly and welcoming and the counsellor was friendly, put me at ease and was very well informed and helpful. I was impressed with the quality of the service and the fact that it is available at no cost. I would have no hesitation in contacting SLD again if I had an issue that I needed help with.

I thought the setting of the service lovely. The study/work/spare time timetable sheet I got was really helpful and I think that it would be a good idea to send it out as an attachment at the beginning of the year/term to everyone.

I found the experience of using the service very helpful. The facilitators were approachable and professional and did not hesitate to answer questions and give good advice. I am glad I availed of the service as it helped me enormously.

The Service enables me to keep focus on my study rather than having many difficulties. The SLD service improved the appointment timings reaching out to many students, as an international student I felt myself it's an opportunity to help ourselves back into academic programme .

...Unfortunately I never considered the service earlier which would have been most helpful as I could have been prioritising all along. I had a good experience, staff were understanding and reassured me a lot that I would be able to manage and I did.

Exam pressures were causing me to have a lot of panic and anxiety especially in the weeks approaching the exams, I made an appointment a few days in advance and the staff I dealt with were very friendly and calming.

Excellent-I used the service to try out 2 academic papers that I was about to give. Very professional and helpful feedback received from staff.

I found the essay writing classes good but thought it would have been better to have specific types like how to write a History essay or how to write a science essay.

The staff were really friendly and they helped me approach my work a lot better. I have a lot of stress and it really limits my performance but for my projects and my presentations they helped me have a better outlook on the whole thing.

The seminar I took on essay writing skills was very helpful in terms of how to plan out essays and avoid procrastination.

Sample Feedback from JF participants in Peer Mentoring:

Our peer mentors were very helpful throughout the year, they sent us emails offering advice and support as well as offering to arrange to meet us, even though they didn't have to, as it was obviously during their free time that they were offering to help us.

I find it hard to think of ways to improve the peer mentoring programme as our peer mentors were certainly attentive and very approachable and friendly.

I made my best friend through the mentoring programme.

I found the programme very helpful. My mentors were very friendly. Perhaps one or two more opportunities to meet later in the year, after the first few weeks.

I felt it was good...We were able to send an email at any time and always got a reply!

I thought it was a great ice-breaker both for the class group and a good start college life in general to have a familiar face on campus and someone you knew you could approach if you had any questions.

I wasn't really involved in the programme but I think others that really needed it benefited from it. It's a good service to have especially coming from people who've been there first hand, and I would feel more comfortable approaching a student my age with a problem rather than an older member of staff if as they seem like I could relate to them more.

Even though my peer group kind of disintegrated the peer supporters really did a great job. They were welcoming friendly approachable and very useful.

They focused more on societies, which is okay but now that the exams are here I wish they had told us more about dealing with them and study methods for throughout the year.

I think this is a great programme and I honestly do wish I had taken advantage of it during my first year, which I ended up finding very tough and not particularly enjoyable.

Sample Feedback from S2S volunteers:

Being a peer mentor helped me connect with first years and it felt good to pass on what I'd learned about making College life work for me. The responsibility of being a peer mentor gave me skills like organisation and leadership and it made me more confident.

One of my favourite things I've done at College. Brilliant experience, great to be able to reach out and give others a helping hand.

You feel like you're "giving back" to the college. Even though what you may be considered rather small, you feel that it could make a big difference to someone else. Peer mentor is kind of like a safety net. Most of the time, you're not "needed" but when you are needed, you make all the difference. And the fact that you are available and the S2S service exists is really important for when someone really needs it.

Especially towards the beginning, the students had a lot of questions about the course itself, and just how to handle college overall. We were able to support them in that, and were able to provide reassurance/explanation for academic issues when they felt it wasn't important enough to ask their tutors or email lecturers about.

A truly unique experience, the only one of its kind in College. One of the best things I've done in College.

I enjoyed working as part of a team to make a positive impact to student life at TCD.

Being an S2S mentor was an experience that taught me a lot about myself! Before signing up I thought I wouldn't be very good at it, but I did surprise myself!

Peer Support experience is quite amazing and I learnt how much of a person's stress is relieved if somebody just listens to his problems.

Being a Peer Supporter/Mentor has meant a lot to me. It allowed me to be a part of and contribute to College life in a unique way.

Trinity is full of ways of making things difficult. It's nice to be a map out of the maze.

Got to meet new people, got to feel like a Trinity expert. It was nice as it made me be a bit more aware of what was going on each week in trinity and made me get involved so that my mentees would.

The year was GOOD! I was happy to be part of the Student2Student mentoring. I enjoyed the way everything is planned and how we engaged ourselves in the College especially when we hosted the CSSI conference. I enjoyed meeting new students, having time to share and help others to settle in the College. I enjoyed the company and the way our co-ordinator is able to involve us in different activities.

It would have been helpful if we had known our buddies a little earlier so we could make contact and maybe meet up and have a chat before the programme started.

I had a great experience being an international peer mentor. I think it helped me to improve my organisational skills and was a great experience overall.