

## TEFCE CONSULTATION WITH CAMPUS ENGAGE (IRELAND)

Skype meeting, Zagreb-Dublin, 3 May 2019

Kate Morris (Campus Engage); Thomas Farnell (Institute for the Development of Education)

### MEETING CONCLUSIONS

- **Campus Engage supports the TEFCE project:** the system-level approach taken is a good one and the initial findings (in the TEFCE policy brief) and the initial principles of the TEFCE Toolbox appear promising to Campus Engage.
- Information shared about the **work of Campus Engage in Ireland**, whose aim (as a part of the Irish Universities Association) is to advance civic and civil society engagement in higher education, focusing specifically on engaged research for societal impact, community-based teaching/learning, student volunteering and policy and practice change for systems change
- Ireland's National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 refers to **civic and community engagement as one of the "three core roles of higher education"**. The Irish Higher Education Authority System Performance Framework, a tool to support higher education institutions to capture activity for system performance funding, includes civic and community engagement in two of its six key system objectives:
  - Objective 2: Creating rich opportunities for national and international engagement which enhances the learning environment and delivers a strong bridge to enterprise and the wider community.
  - Objective 3: Excellent research, development and innovation that has relevance, growing engagement with external partners and impact for the economy and society and strengthens our standing to become an Innovation Leader in Europe.

The detailed metrics which form the basis for the higher education System Performance Compacts with the higher education institutions, **14 metrics specifically relate to civic and community engagement activity** across research, teaching and learning.

- Part of the success of Campus Engage can be attributed to its framing it around planning for higher education societal impact through **research and innovation, excellent science, and student skills**, rather than using a more definition focusing exclusively on social justice. The case for engagement is thus made in a way that is inclusive of research, teaching and learning, access, internationalisation etc. and in a way that is compelling for a broad range of actors in higher education and at the policy level. In other words, the engagement is framed as the ambition of higher education to want to support cross-party stakeholders (Government, NGOs, public service users, policy makers etc.) to address societal challenges.

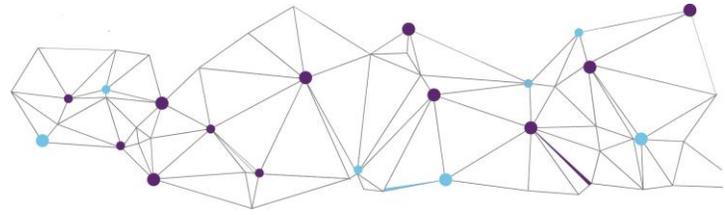
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- Regarding the **measurement of civic engagement**, while Campus Engage acknowledges that it is difficult to measure, defining key performance indicators is possible, although they should always be contextualised, and relevant to the institutional ambition. Therefore, a core principle of measuring engagement should be “no numbers without stories: no stories without numbers”.
- Regarding **university rankings** (which the TEFCE project criticises), it appears unlikely that they will disappear and they remain a powerful way to influence university decisions. In this sense, KM sees the new Times Higher Education rankings based universities contribution to the SDGs (which includes e.g. engagement with Carbon Capture and Storage through research and teaching learning) as a positive step forward, rather than as a negative development.
- Regarding **challenges and success factors** for engagement: a key challenge in civic engagement is funding to support the implementation of such engagement, particularly to support the involvement of the *community*; a key success factor is strong leadership and institutional backing.
- Campus Engage is open to the idea of participating in **further dialogue** about the TEFCE Toolbox and the project as a whole at a special stakeholder event and can also help connect the TEFCE project with the new EUA president, who is the former Chair of the Irish Universities Association.

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