

# **Quantifying and Mapping Staff External Engagement – A DCU Pilot in Understanding the Scale and Scope of Staff External Engagement**

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8<sup>th</sup> September, 2016**

# A DCU pilot in understanding the scale of scope of staff external engagement



## Context

***"Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve" (National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030)***

- Economic Crisis – debate on the value of higher education institutions
- Higher education institutions responded by producing reports on their economic and social value
- ‘Non market’ activities mainly focussed on visible university initiatives/programmes e.g. Access programmes, student volunteering
- However, a 2009 UK survey of academic staff reported that “53% of academics interact with the public sector, 12% more than those that interact with the private sector.” (Abreu et al, 2009)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup><http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/357117/1/AcademicSurveyReport.pdf>



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## Engagement at DCU

Capturing the Economic and Social Value of Higher Education, A Pilot Study of Dublin City University

- Measured the social and economic impact of the university
- Adopted a holistic economic valuation approach
- Broader social & cultural aspects of the university not overlooked
- Value of these Non-market' activities to the community – SMEV of €4.9M

DCU Student Volunteering Survey 2015

- To understand what motivates student volunteers at DCU
- Almost 61% of respondents engaged in volunteer activity
- Averaging 60 hours per year
- Estimated economic value to area of more than €300k



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## DCU Staff External Engagement Survey

- Follow on from Social and Economic impact report
- Report recognised that staff were engaged in other unpaid public service activities but staff themselves were not including them
- Type of engagement was therefore not being captured in DCU
- A similar survey by Kent University in 2014 estimated an economic value of £24M<sup>2</sup>

### Aim of survey

- To gain a better understanding of the scope and scale of external engagement of staff in DCU
- Aid in the development of economic costing model
- Inform future work on workload models and promotion criteria

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/about/impact/downloads/regional-impact-2014.pdf>



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## *What was asked?*

- Respondents asked to indicate the type of activity and estimate the average amount of time per month on the activities within the **past two years**
- 6 Sections subdivided  
e.g. Under Government Activities respondents were asked if
  - Contributed to central government committees
  - Contributed to state-sponsored bodies
  - Contributed to national non-commercial state agencies
  - Other
- Delivered online & open to all staff of the university

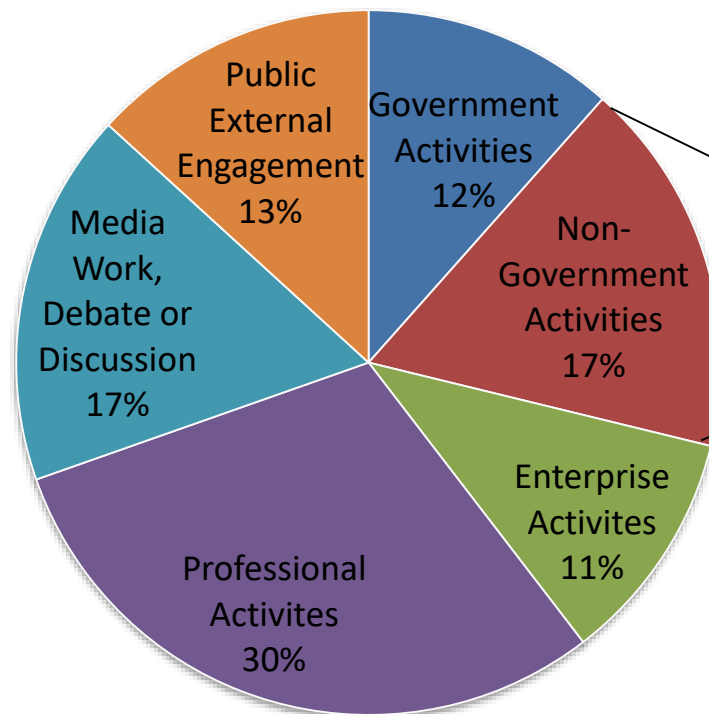


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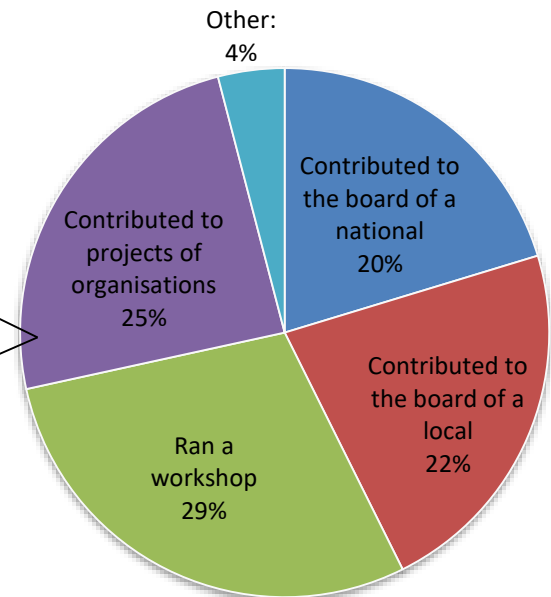
## Types of Engagement reported

### Profile of Respondents

- 236 Responses ( $\approx 13\%$  of Staff)
- 60% were academic staff
- 53% Over of the age of 45
- 1142 Activities selected / 6 Sections



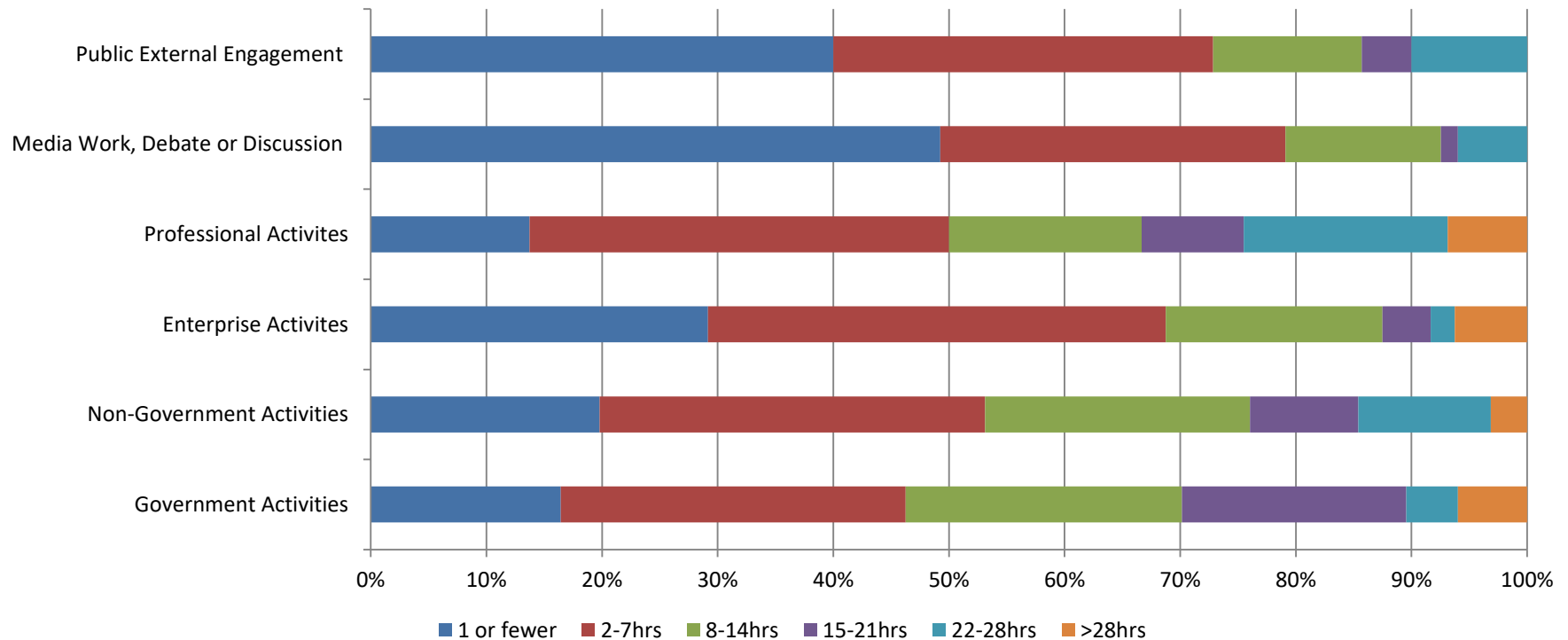
### Non-Governmental Charitable, Community, arts or voluntary organisation



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Respondents contributing an estimated

- Total of 3891 hours a month on external engagement activities
- 8 hours per month on average per respondent



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## RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

The need for engagement to be recognised and valued

***“Recognition of these activities re teaching duties / promotion prospects”***

Increased demands on academics

***“I would really like more time to engage in external activities, but my teaching, admin and research take up too much of my time.”***



The importance of external engagement was highlighted by some respondents.

***“Glad to see it getting some recognition - this is often counted as 'outside' work i.e. aside from the day-to-day work of lecturing/teaching/research and therefore preparation is often confined to evenings and weekends. Regardless, this is an important part of our role with the Community and government agencies.”***



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## Next Steps

***“The engagement of academics in consultancy should be facilitated as part of their normal duties where this is of mutual benefit to the individual, the institution and society.” (National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030)***




- Recognition of the potential value of this form of engagement
- More detailed information
- Development of an economic pricing structure
- Feed into future workload models and promotion criteria



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## Challenges

***“Demand for third level full time education expected to continue to rise every year over the period 2015-2029” (Projections of demand for full time third level education, 2015 – 2029 ,Department of Education, November 2015)***

- Reductions in exchequer funding 
- Continued increases in student numbers (over 200K new entrants in 2029 an increase of over 38K on 2014) 
- Increase in staff workload 

Result:

- Focus on income generating activities
- Decrease in activity not formerly recognised or valued