

**Purposefully
different,
consistently
excellent**

Student Experiences of Institutional consolidation: Merging Cultures, Managing Expectations

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Outline

The DCU Incorporation Process

Student Experience- Existing and Shifting Cultures

Key Issues for DCU to Understand

Our Approach

Key Results to Inform Enhancement



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DCU Incorporation





Post-Incorporation DCU

- Creation of DCU Institute of Education
- Significantly expanded Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- 13,000 students to 17,000 students
- 50F:50M gender mix to 58F:42M gender mix
- Teaching across 3 campuses



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Post-Incorporation DCU



**DCU Sports
campus**

**DCU Alpha-
Innovation
campus**

**DCU
St. Patrick's
campus**

**DCU Glasnevin
campus**

**DCU All Hallows
campus**

2km
from M1

5km
from city centre

1 km

Student Life in Post-Incorporation DCU

Single Campus DCU, to Multi-campus DCU

Students travelling between campuses

Existing campus cultures, emerging campus cultures



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A Post Incorporation Environment :Lessons from the Past

- The greatest vulnerability for the newly created organization is cultural disparity (Harman, 2002)¹
- A student's sense of belonging on a campus is critical to social cohesion and identifying with a university community. (De Beer et al., 2009)²
- A Sense of Belonging is a factor in persistence (Glass et. Al., 2014)³

1:Harman, K. (2002). Merging divergent campus cultures into coherent educational communities: Challenges for higher education leaders. *Higher Education*, 44, 91–114.

2 Dr Josef de Beer , Ubbo Smith & Carol Jansen (2009) 'Situating' in a separated campus – Students' sense of belonging and academic performance: A case study of the experiences of students during a higher education merger, *Education As Change*, 13:1, 167-194,

3 C.R. Glass, C.M. Westmont / *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 38 (2014) 106–119



Issues for DCU to Understand

- During Incorporation
 - Awareness of the process
 - Awareness of student supports
- Post-Incorporation
 - Experience of cross-campus movement
 - Student identity and belonging across multiple campuses
 - Emerging “new” student cultures



Our Approach

- During Incorporation
 - 2015/16- 1st Year Survey
 - Awareness
 - Baseline on cross-campus movement
 - Listening to student concerns
- Post-Incorporation
 - 2016/17- Institute of Education Survey
 - ISSE benchmarks across all faculties
 - 2017/18- survey and focus group research



2015/16 Research

Focus on in-coming 1st year undergraduate students

Broad questions on student life and transitions to higher education

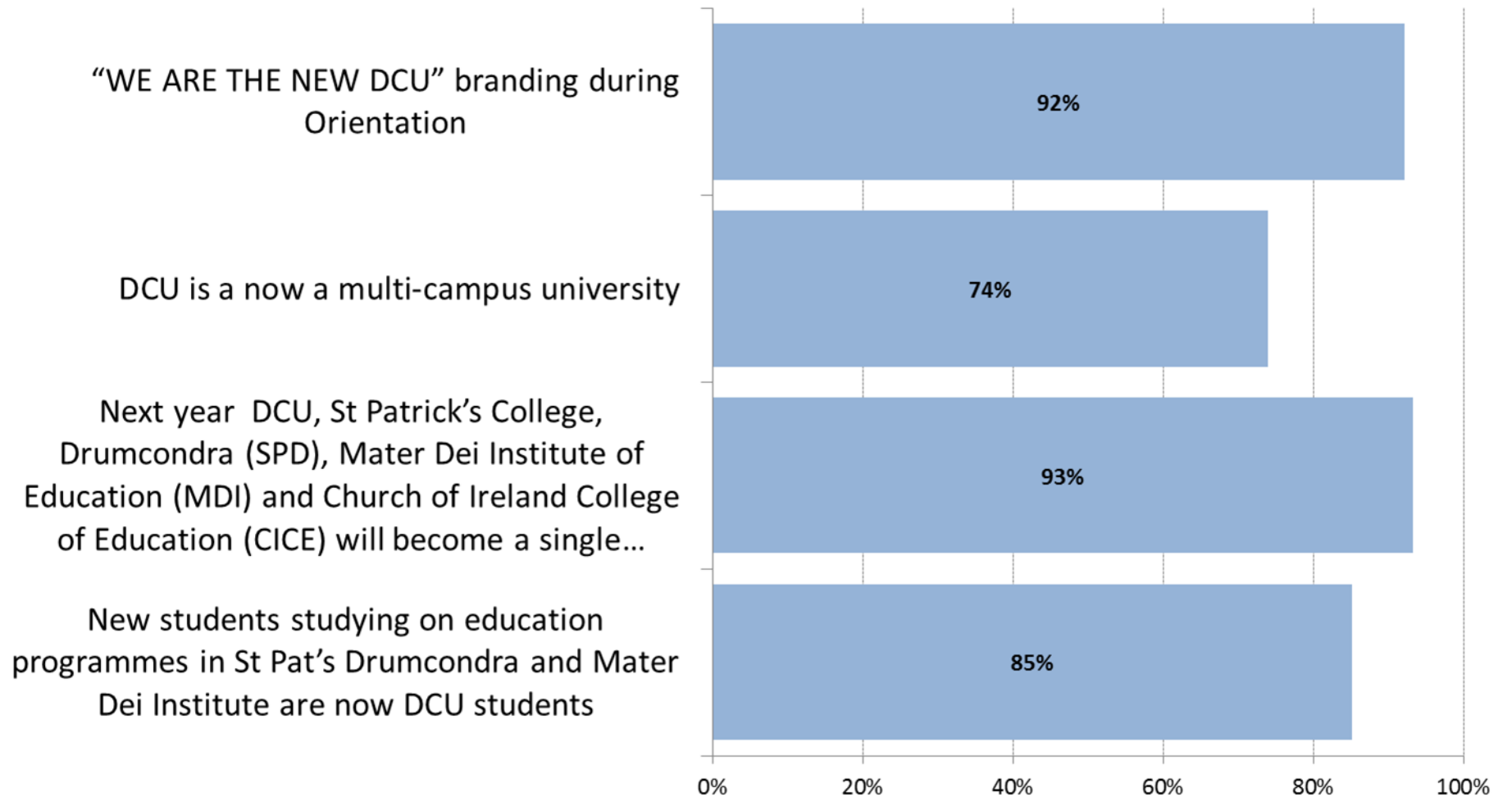
A number of questions to explore awareness of, and current impact of Incorporation Process



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DCU Student Awareness of Incorporation Process

Student Awareness of Aspect of Incorporation- % Aware





*“It feels as if there is little inclusion of the Pats "campus" into DCU. There are constantly clashing SU events, mix-ups over class reps and most people in St. Pats seem to dislike the idea of Incorporation with DCU because already **we just have been doing our own thing**”*

“St Pats students should spend longer for orientation week, on their own campus rather than DCU Glasnevin campus”.

“Try and have events held in Pat's or Mater Dei to encourage people to get a feel for a multi-campus university.”



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Low proportions of students moving between campuses for class or social purposes

All Students	% Often
Attended classes on both the DCU Glasnevin campus and DCU St Patrick's campus	4%
Travelled between the DCU Glasnevin campus and St Patrick's campuses	7%
Attended the DCU Glasnevin Campus for social or extra-curricular events	53%
Attended the DCU St Patrick's Campus for social or extra-curricular events	14%

Institute of Education	% Often
Attended classes on both the DCU Glasnevin campus and DCU St Patrick's campus	2%
Travelled between the DCU Glasnevin campus and St Patrick's campuses	19%
Attended the DCU Glasnevin Campus for social or extra-curricular events	25%
Attended the DCU St Patrick's Campus for social or extra-curricular events	61%



2016/17 Research – Full Incorporation

Focus on students based/travelling to St Patrick's Campus for lectures

Questions on Student Experience, Facilities & Commuting

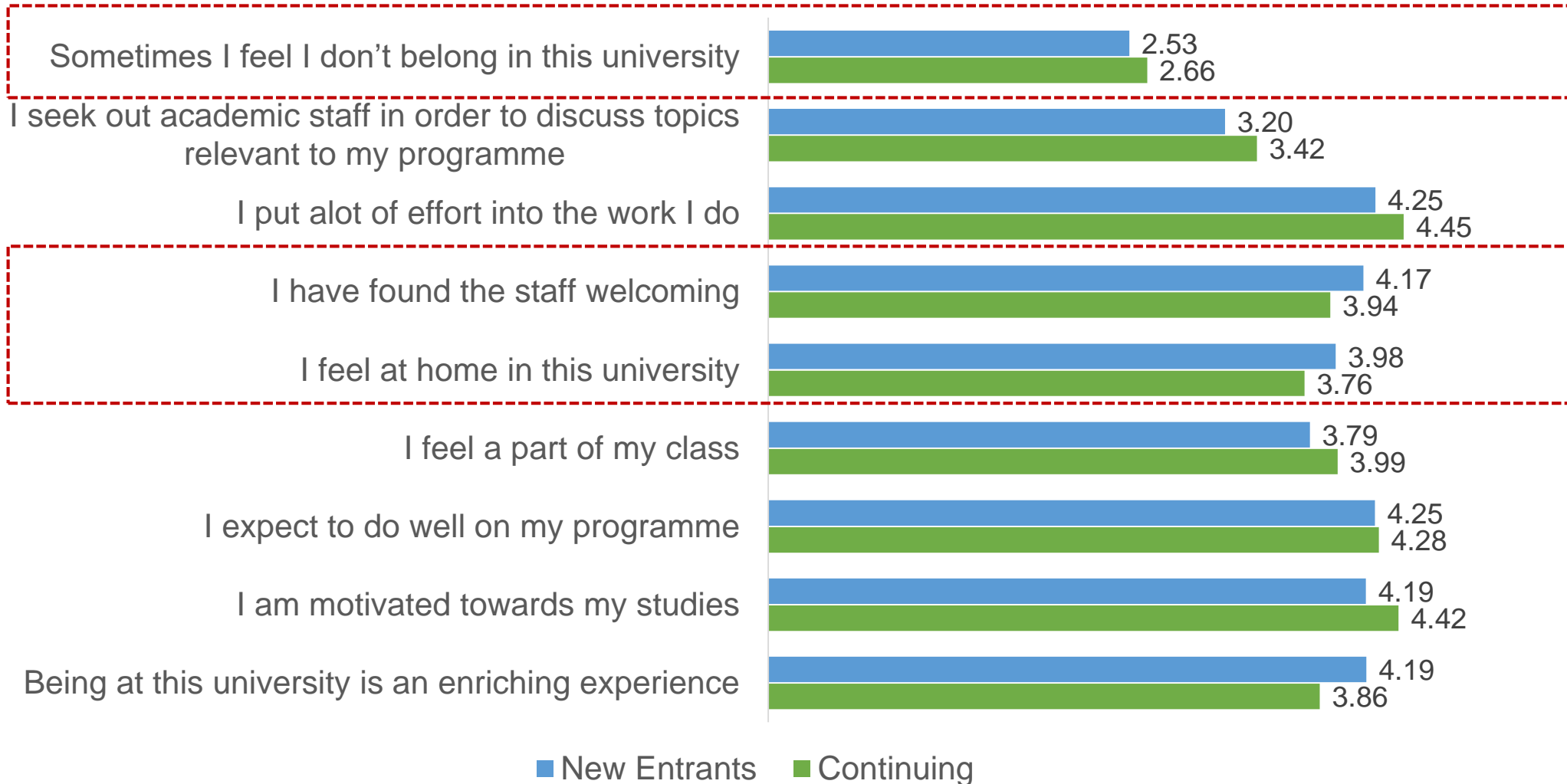
Open Ended Questions on Best Experience and How to Improve Overall Experience



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Inst of Education Survey Summary Results

Institute of Education Student Experience



Different Experiences Same Campus

*Pats has lost its homely and unique atmosphere with the DCU takeover. **With no SU I don't feel our students are understood anymore** and the craic which was once so abundant in Pats is gone, with all events happening in DCU.*

*Personal experience with friends from Mater Dei. We have had to rely on each other massively as **nobody from DCU made any effort to make us welcome.***

The students union have done a terrific job in amalgamating the colleges! The daytime events which they have organised over the year (speakers, sports, teacher appreciation day) were brilliant and having members of the students union constantly walking around St Pats created a sense of unity between the 2 campuses.

*"I think the beginning of the semester is always great fun as **everyone is always so welcoming and friendly.** The DLSS are fantastic too"*



Feelings of a Loss of Identity and Culture

More events, clubs etc on St Patrick's campus. **Feels like we've been forgotten about now that we're DCU**

Until this year i would have answered 'strongly agree' to the 'I feel a part of my class' statement. However since the amalgamation i strongly believe that the **idea of a class has been taken away and in turn our close-knit community in Pats.**

The St Patrick's Campus has a comradery that is absolutely nowhere to be seen in the Glasnevin Campus. DCU's 'amalgamation' or takeover has been a farce and they have left the St Patrick's rocked by the sudden influx of more students,

with the amalgamation St Pats **lost fantastic societies that had become part of the culture** of the college especially in the past few years. The atmosphere that used to exist in the college as a result has sadly been lost.



2017/18 Research – 1 Year Post Incorporation

Focussed on 2nd and 3rd Year Students

Mantz Yorke Survey on belongingness, Engagement & Self-Confidence*

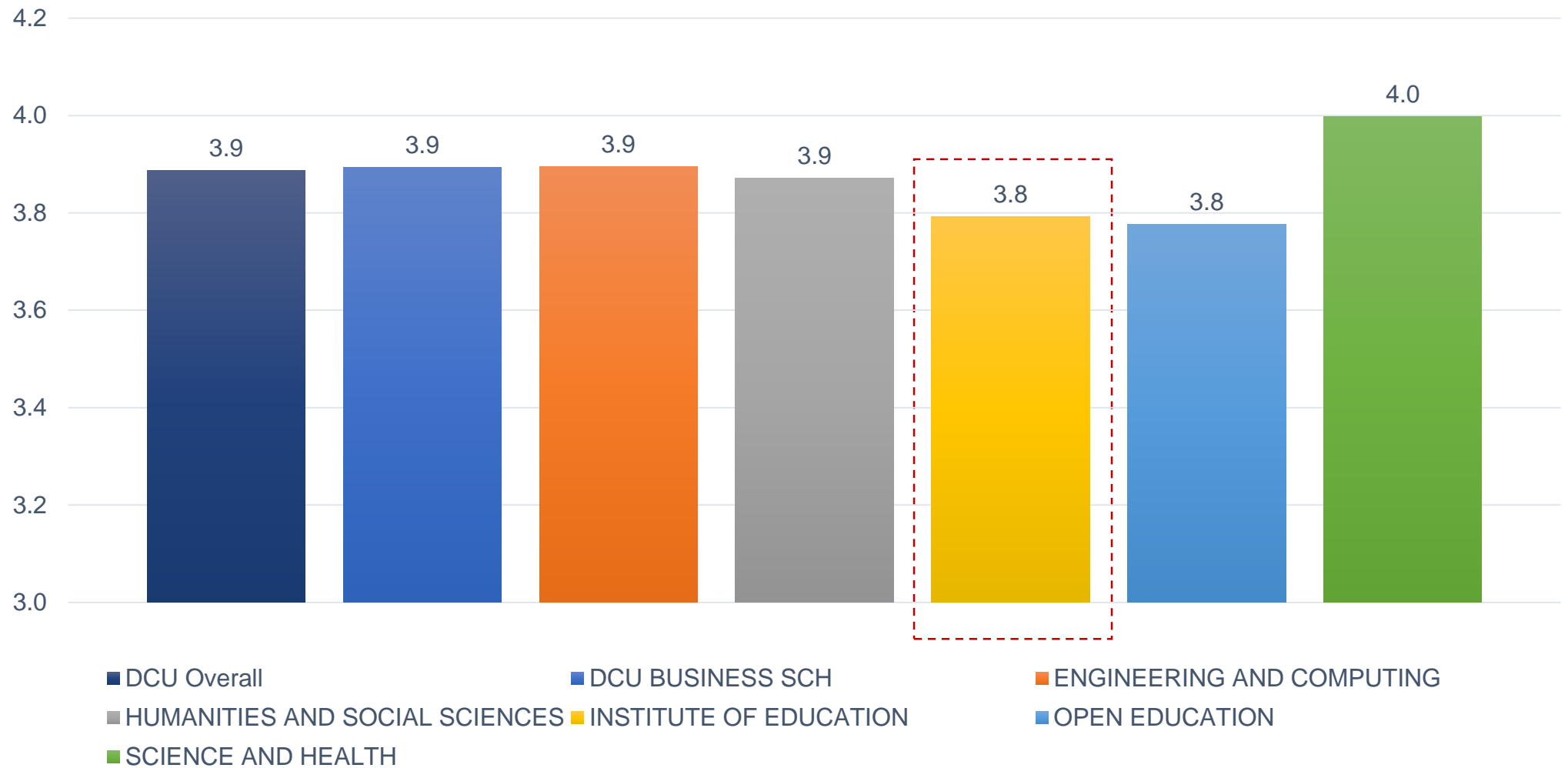
Focus Groups- a focus on “campus-movers”



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Belongingness Index Results*- 1yr Post Incorporation

Belongingness

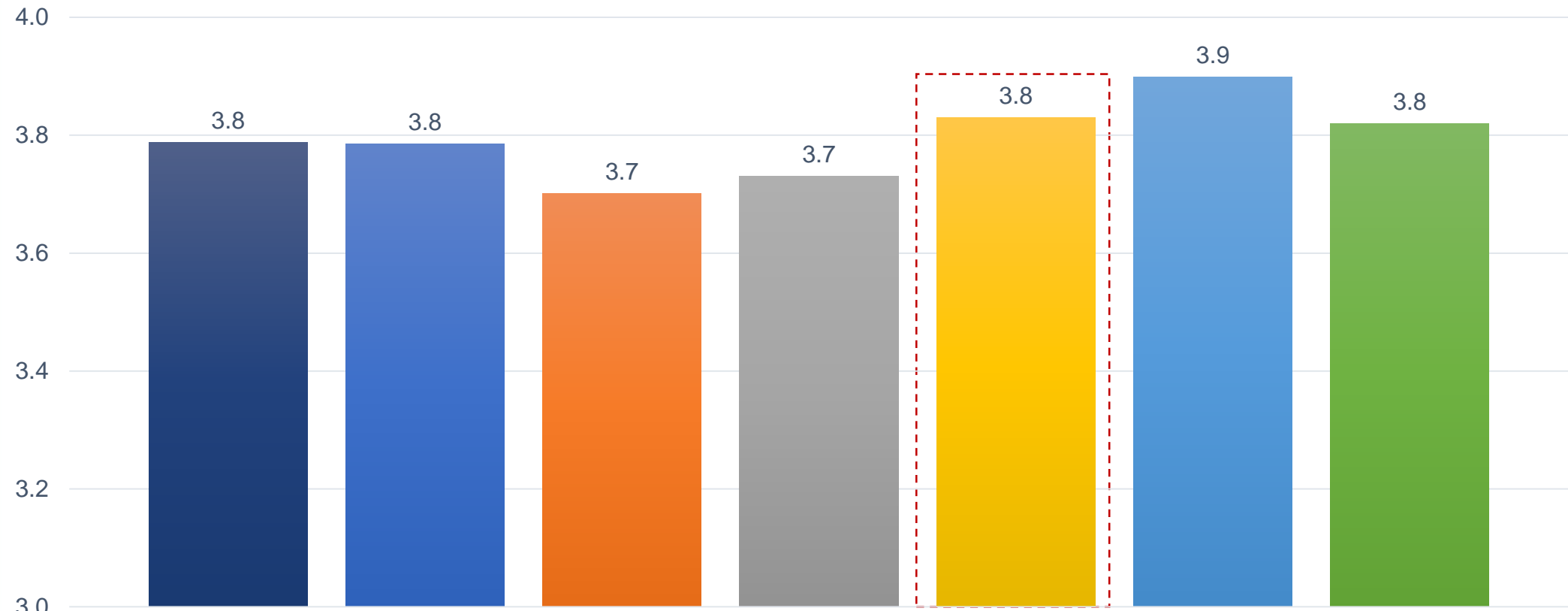


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Engagement Index Results- 1yr Post Incorporation

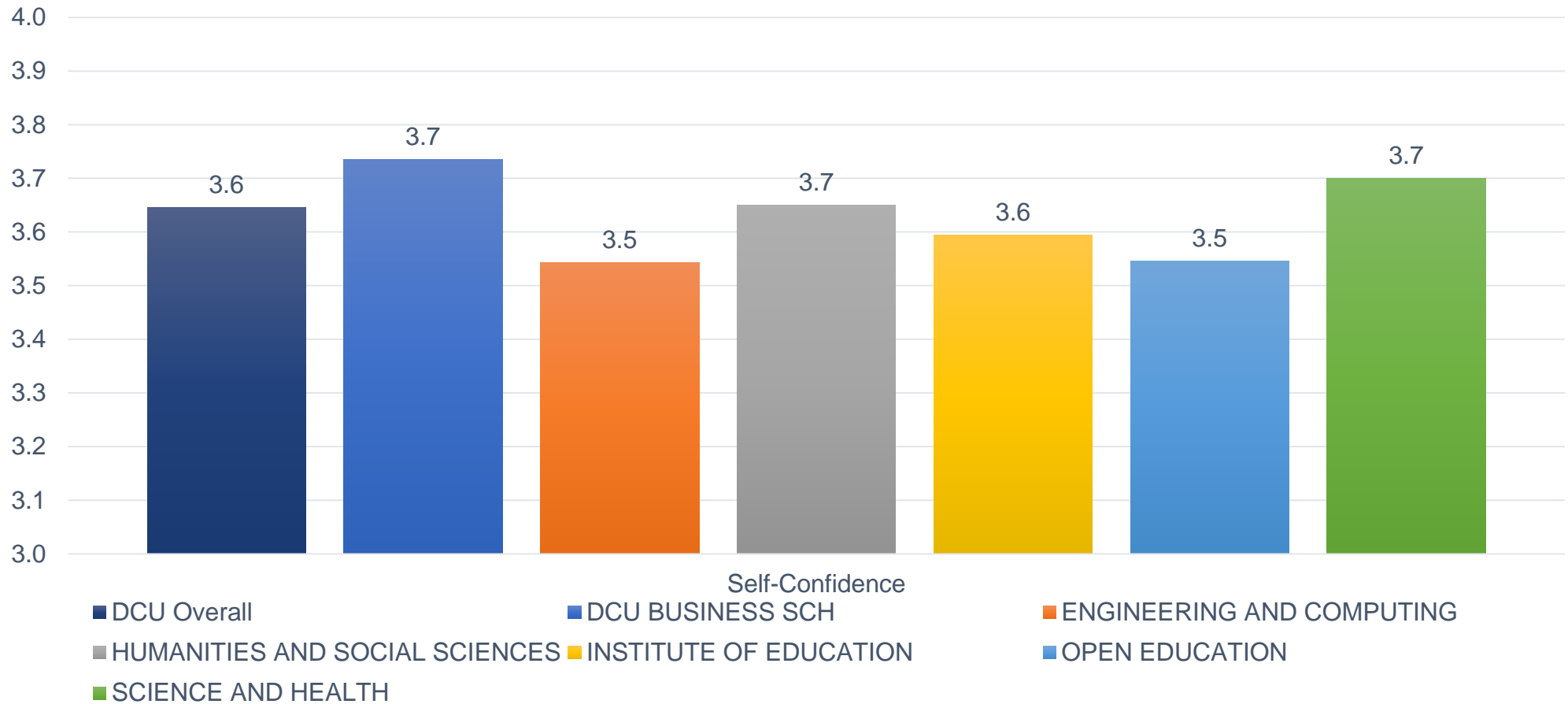
Engagement Indicators



- DCU Overall
- DCU BUSINESS SCH
- ENGINEERING AND COMPUTING
- HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
- INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
- OPEN EDUCATION
- SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Self-Confidence Index Results- 1yr Post Incorporation

Self-Confidence



St Patrick's Campus – Cultural Identity

Previous research shows that a feeling of belonging is a key factor in student success*

A study on Incorporated students in SA showed that being on a different campus to the main campus can lead to a lack of a sense of belonging**

Students from the Institute identified cultural identity as an issue DCU needed to improve on

“Allowing pats to keep more of their identity.”

“Making the Pats campus feel more part of DCU, nubar type thing on pats”

*Freeman, Anderman and Jensen (2007)

**Dr Josef de Beer , Ubbo Smith & Carol Jansen (2009) 'Situated' in a separated campus – Students' sense of belonging and academic performance: A case study of the experiences of students during a higher education merger, Education As Change, 13:1, 167-194,



Campus Movers – Belonging goes both Ways

- Students feel they belong to the campus that they applied for on their CAO form.
 - *“When I did my CAO, I signed up for a course in DCU and now I have classes in Pat’s and I did not want to go to Pat’s. For me it’s very frustrating.”(third year)*
 - *“We are not allowed display any of the old St Pat’s or any memorabilia.”*
- Second and third years senses of belonging to the incorporated institutions is stronger than first years.
- Some Positives: Moving between different campuses can have some benefits as they are able to take advantage of more facilities and different ambiances.
 - “Keeping up with old friends from home who go to St. Pat’s, like I wouldn’t see them unless I was a multi-campus student. It’s really nice to say ‘Oh, on a Thursday I am down in Pat’s, I have a break, you have a break, do you want to go for a coffee?’”*



Fostering a sense of Belonging

- Involvement of Students in “One DCU” initiative
- Recognising and respecting previous cultures, and individual campus cultures
- More research to guide the way!



Your Experiences?
Your Questions?
Your Comments?

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