

TRANSITIONS TO CIT PROJECT

CASE STUDY BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES



PROJECT TITLE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES FIRST YEAR INDUCTION AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2017/2018

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAMME

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

PROJECT TEAM

DR. MÁIRE BEGLEY AND DR. JIM O' MAHONY DEVISED, CO-ORDINATED AND RAN THE PROJECT

PROFILE

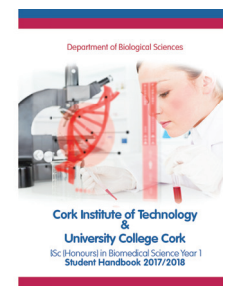
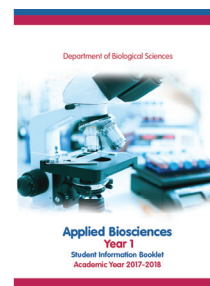
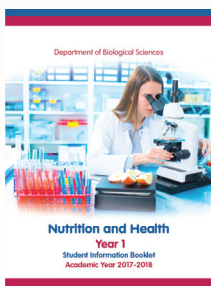
OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT

The primary aim of our project was to organize student social and academic induction events and initiatives within our department with a view to creating opportunities to allow social integration of students. Another aim was to encourage communication between students in different years of courses.

DESCRIPTION

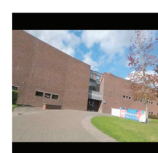
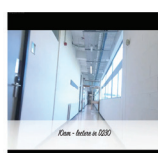
COURSE INDUCTION BOOKLETS:

New induction booklets were developed last year with the help of a graphic designer for each of our six degree programmes. This year the booklets needed to be revised to incorporate changes made during our departmental programmatic review process. A5 versions of the booklets were professionally printed in colour. In addition to containing information about each of the courses the booklets contain a map showing the location of labs and lecture rooms, e-mail addresses of all lecturers etc. We believe that the booklets convey information in a succinct manner and are very visually appealing (the cover pages of all 6 booklets are shown below). The feedback on these booklets was extremely positive and students continued to use them in the second semester.



VIDEO:

In parallel to the booklets, we produced a short student centred video relevant to our department entitled "A Day in the Life of a Biology Student". The video was a virtual tour of the department, lecture rooms, laboratories, offices, library, administration building, student centre, sports facilities etc. Still shots from the video are shown below.





DESCRIPTION

WELCOME RECEPTION:

A coffee morning with refreshments was organized for all first year students in week 1 of the semester. It was attended by the majority of our departmental staff. This event helped to build a sense of community and encouraged interaction amongst students and staff.

BIOTECHNOLOGY SOCIETY:

We helped facilitate students to set up a new society. 122 students from our department signed up to the society on societies' registration day. The society committee organised a number of events throughout the year including a breakfast morning, a pizza night, an event with the CIT Film Society and a tour of Rising Sons Brewery.

Representatives from the society spoke to 1st year classes as part of their Creativity Innovation and Teamwork module and provided their experiences of the course to date, work placement, career plans etc.

Over the course of the first semester the committee set up group chats to give advice to 3rd year students going for interviews and answer questions about industry placement. They also set up meetings/group chats for students going abroad and collaborated with the Tech Talk society to give a presentation about going on work placement.

Students from the society organized an event for World Health Organization Antibiotics Awareness Week in November. They set up an information stand in the hall inside the entrance to the main building and they spoke and engaged with students on the topic of antimicrobial resistance with the aim of helping to create awareness for the issue and promote antibiotic stewardship. An interactive quiz was carried out with prizes of a tablet and an All for One voucher. Below are some pictures from the event.



BENEFITS

- The project created opportunities to allow interaction amongst students from different years of our courses. It also provided an opportunity to increase student interaction with lecturers.
- The course booklets were of use to both students and staff. Students found the information contained within the booklets very helpful. Class co-ordinators used the booklets at our departmental induction meeting with each first year class. We also believe that the high quality and professional appearance of the booklets gives a very good overall first impression of our department.



IMPACT & OUTCOMES

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

It is difficult to put an exact figure on how many students were positively impacted but it was ~180 students at the very least (all of our 1st years).

FEEDBACK FROM STAFF & STUDENTS

STUDENT FEEDBACK ON THE COURSE INFORMATION BOOKLETS AND VIDEO:

- “The booklets were very clear. They were very helpful to me in getting module codes so it was easy to buy lab manuals. I also found them useful for getting lecturers email addresses”.
- “I thought the booklets were excellent. I was able to get information that I wouldn't have known who to ask for.”
- “The video was very helpful to me in my first few days around CIT.”

STUDENT FEEDBACK ON THE BIOTECHNOLOGY SOCIETY:

- “The society was a great way to connect different year groups and courses together. It was a chance for students to ask personal questions and get the answers they needed, while also having a bit of fun”.
- “The society was very useful in connecting students, particularly final year and third students”.
- “The events were a nice break away from the academic side of college life”.

STAFF FEEDBACK ON THE COURSE INFORMATION BOOKLETS: (FROM YR 1 CLASS CO-ORDINATOR)

“There is a lot of information for students to take in during the half hour induction meeting. It is nice for students to have a tangible go-to-guide to take away with them that they can reference then in their own time throughout the whole year.”

STAFF FEEDBACK ON THE BIOTECHNOLOGY SOCIETY:

“The Biotechnology Society leaders came to speak to my first year group in semester one about the function of the society and role it could play in the first year's career development and adaptation to CIT. The talk created great excitement among the first year group, with many commenting on how they were delighted to have the opportunity to join a society catering to their needs and interests. They appreciated having a forum where they could meet with students in later years and learn from their experiences, while also gaining new skills and information about biotechnology from arranged site visits, guest speakers and society gatherings. The speakers from the Biotechnology Society were professional and enthusiastic, providing a first-class exemplar of the potential development that these first years could achieve during their time in CIT.”

STAFF FEEDBACK ON THE OVERALL PROJECT:

“The students benefitted tremendously from the many activities funded through this programme. In particular, the project allowed us to integrate the students and staff in a more meaningful way and facilitated a positive transition to CIT for our Biology students.”