

We Cannot Be Who We Cannot See – Exploring the Extent to which Students' Union officers can be Truly Representative of an Increasingly Diverse Student Body.

Kevin Mc Stravock 

University of Winchester, k.mcstravock.20@unimail.winchester.ac.uk

Abstract.

The last few decades have seen an increased diversification of the student body in higher education. Simultaneously, the collective representation of students through student representative bodies has become a central component of the higher education culture in Ireland, the UK and Europe. This paper aims to explore the challenges that student representatives, often known as student officers, face in effectively communicating the views of the entire diversity of students they represent. In exploring this issue, the paper outlines some of the key demographics typically referred to as 'hard to reach' (Shaw, Humphrey, Atvars & Sims, 2017) or 'non-traditional' (Smith, 2008) who tend to engage less visibly in student representative activities. In identifying some of the key student demographics that this issue tends to affect, the paper outlines some of the practical and cultural barriers that prevent them from fully engaging with student representation, and how this impacts the extent to which student representative bodies can effectively advocate on their behalf. In concluding, the paper identifies some existing practices that may warrant further exploration by student representatives and higher education institutions in order to ensure the diversity of the student body is effectively heard through representative structures.

Keywords: Equality & Diversity; Higher Education; Student Representation.

1. Introduction.

The role of student representation in Higher Education has evolved over the decades. From its origins as part of a wave of democratisation across Western Europe and North America in the 1970s (Luescher-Mamashala, 2012), the collective representation of students is now an expected norm across Western Higher Education (Bols, 2020). Bols (2020, p. 66) describes student representation as "*the wider roles and activities of representing the views of*

students...often undertaken by institutional, national or international student representatives". Students' Unions (SUs) traditionally undertake this function through a pyramid structure, consisting of a small number of paid full-time student representatives at the top, supported by a range of other academic representatives who are generally organised at Faculty, School and Course level (Brooks, Byford & Sela, 2014). Some regard representation as the primary role of Students' Unions (Bols, 2020), and if executed effectively, it can potentially have a transformative impact on the student experience.

That being said, against a backdrop of increased participation, described as the "*massification*" (Hazelkorn et al., 2015, p. 237) of Higher Education in the UK and Ireland, the role of Students' Union representatives in representing the collective views of an increasingly diverse student body is greatly challenged (Flint & O'Hara, 2013; Brooks, Byford & Sel., 2015a). This paper will explore the changing nature of student representation, focusing on the role of elected students' union officers, sometimes referred to as '*sabbatical officers*', in representing the views of a wider diversity of students. This paper will discuss some of the barriers that these students face in engaging with their Students' Union and the extent to which Students' Union Officers can be truly representative of these groups. Finally, in concluding, we will explore recommendations on how Students' Unions can more effectively represent the views of a constantly changing student demographic.

2. A vision of diversity.

Participation in Higher Education has increased and diversified in both the UK (McVitty & Morris, 2012; Saubert, 2014) and Ireland (Hazelkorn et al., 2015) over the last few decades, mainly due to an increased emphasis at the government level on widening access and participation (Butcher, 2015; Hazelkorn et al., 2015; Bols, 2017). Despite the increased diversity in student demographics, many of these groups typically struggle to adapt to Higher Education surroundings, with labels such as '*hard to reach*' (Shaw et al., 2017) and '*non-traditional*' (Smith, 2008) being coined to explore the challenges that they face. However, terms like this fail to capture the full story of the students they aim to represent and have been criticised by some (Marie, MacKenzie, Rowett & Wright, 2017; Goddard, 2017) for placing them in direct comparison to other students – the '*traditional*', engaged students. We can learn from this the importance of placing equal value on and paying equal attention to each learner's experience. These terms typically denote groups such as mature students (Frith & Wilson, 2014), Black and

Ethnic Minority students (Royal Irish Academy & British Council, 2020), working-class students (Glazzard, 2017) and students with disabilities (Rath, 2020; Brown & Broido, 2020). It is important to note that these groups do not exist in complete silos, and many students occupy many of these identities (McVitty & Morris, 2012, Museus, Griffin & Quaye, 2020). Non-demographic characteristics often come into play here; for example, mature students often study part-time (McVitty & Morris, 2012; Frith & Wilson, 2014), and commuter students often occupy multiple other minoritised identities (Thomas & Jones, 2017). Each demographic brings its unique challenges. Kouzoukas (2020) states that it is essential to recognise and acknowledge students' multiple identities and how they intersect and influence their experience. Therefore, there is a need to examine both the unique challenges faced by certain groups and those that are shared across many groups. This will form the basis of the next section.

3. Engaging diverse students in Students' Unions.

Research points to varying engagement in Students' Union activity across different demographics (Sims et al., 2017), with mature students, ethnic minority students and students with disabilities amongst those least likely to engage (Stuart et al., 2009). The reasons vary across and even within demographic groups, but many of the core barriers to engagement are common across many demographics (Stuart et al., 2009). Practical barriers that so-called non-traditional students face compared to their young, white, non-disabled peers include lack of time to devote to extra-curricular activities (Stuart et al., 2009; Bols, 2017). For example, mature learners are more likely to have additional caring responsibilities (Stuart et al., 2009) and are more likely to work outside of University to support their families (Chapman, Parmar & Trotter, 2007). Therefore, these additional responsibilities lessen the time available for some students to engage with their Students' Union.

Working-class and ethnic minority students are also more likely to rely on employment during their studies, limiting the time available for them to engage with extra-curricular activities (Stuart et al., 2009). Brooks et al. (2015b) suggest that this is an example of a socio-economic divide where those typically engaged in Students' Union activity such as clubs & societies or student representation are generally those who can afford not to spend that time in paid employment. This socioeconomic divide is also evident in the significant increase in off-campus commuter students (Humphrey & Lowe, 2017), many of whom share other minoritised identities (Thomas & Jones, 2017). Living off-campus poses another barrier to participation, meaning they are less

likely to be aware of the Students' Union (Lowe, 2019) or run for any representative positions (Brooks et al., 2015b). Where they do take up representative roles, they are likely to face further barriers accessing training and meetings, which are usually held on campus during the day (Thomas & Jones, 2017) when many of these students may not be in attendance. These are just some of the hidden barriers that inhibit the participation of specific cohorts in SU activities. Practical barriers to participation can quickly become social and emotional barriers leading to a sense of exclusion or a diminished feeling of community amongst cohorts who have less access to physical SU spaces (Brooks et al., 2015b). Exploring the concept of '*sense of belonging*', Humphrey & Lowe (2017) find that those who live off-campus are less likely to believe that SU activities positively contribute to their sense of belonging, due primarily to less exposure than their on-campus counterparts. Butcher (2015) explores this through the lens of part-time students who are more likely to feel marginalised due to the emphasis placed on campus engagement. Less than half of those interviewed were aware of their SU. Mature students often feel this sense of exclusion, according to Frith & Wilson (2014). Therefore, it is clear that an overemphasis on on-campus engagement creates not just a practical barrier for specific cohorts but a social barrier too. Given the previously mentioned barriers to engagement, it is perhaps unsurprising that research suggests that many of these groups are poorly represented in student leadership positions, particularly mature students and ethnic minority students (Brooks et al., 2015a). Institutional data from Middlesex University also suggests that Black, African, Caribbean and Black British students are slightly underrepresented, and white students are slightly overrepresented in academic representative roles (Lewis & Struetzel, 2019). It is not just that many demographics are not represented in student leadership roles, but that they are not putting themselves forward for these roles. It appears that this is due to a combination of the practical barriers we have previously explored and a sense of distance from the Students' Union – a feeling that the SU is inaccessible to students like them.

Even where these students go for election, research suggests that the playing field is not always totally level. For example, their external commitments often prohibit them from developing the same social networks that other students build through living in halls and engaging in extra-curricular activities (Stuart et al., 2009; Thomas & Jones, 2017). These on-campus engagements often prove crucial in building networks and developing a reputation that benefits them in an election (Brooks et al., 2015a). This demonstrates the inequality between these students and the so-called '*traditional*' student – typically younger, white, middle-class students

who live on or close to campus and are directly involved in all aspects of student life. With a clear advantage in building social networks, it is hardly surprising that these cohorts are represented on Students' Union teams far more frequently than mature students, black and ethnic minority students, and working-class students.

For some, it may seem immaterial what demographic Students' Union leaders are drawn from as long as they represent the views of all students. However, Brooks et al. (2015a) note that students are far less likely to run for election if they have no visible role models with whom they can identify. Similarly, Rath (2020) notes that students with disabilities take great pride and encouragement from seeing other students with disabilities in leadership roles. Campbell & Wolbrecht explored this same point in the broader context of female representation in politics, finding that visible representation of women is key to encouraging other women into politics. Furthermore, where most or all Students' Union leaders come from narrow demographics, this can create the perception that they only represent a specific cohort of students, further disincentivising participation amongst those from other groups (Stuart et al., 2009). This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy where students perceive their SU to be unrepresentative of their interests and thus do not engage, making it more difficult for the SU to fulfil its' role as the legitimate representative voice of all students.

4. The SU as a 'representative' voice of all.

Students' Union critics often point towards their average engagement figures of around 16% (Lowe & Dunne, 2017) and limited engagement by minority cohorts (Kandiko & Mawer, 2013) as evidence that they are unrepresentative of the entire student body. Indeed, recent years have seen increased public criticism of Students Unions, with some Government figures accusing them of being run by an exclusive clique pushing an overly political agenda that threatens free speech (Hazel, 2021). These arguments echo UK Conservative Ministers' labelling of SUs as a "*closed shop*" back in the 90s (Day & Dickinson, 2018, p.40). The background to many of these debates derives from Students' Unions refusing to platform speakers they deem to pose a risk to minority groups. Therefore, it could be argued that these actions actually denote an enhanced commitment to equality and diversity amongst Students' Unions. This focus on equality and diversity is reflected in the relatively strong representation of LGBT+ students in sabbatical officer roles (Brooks et al., 2015a).

Whilst increased visibility of minority student cohorts in SU leadership roles can be a positive sign of inclusion, it does not however guarantee that issues faced by these cohorts will be prioritised. If we take the example of LGBT+ students, Phipps (2020) found significant gaps in SU awareness and action surrounding LGBT+ inclusion in campus sport despite the perceived increase in LGBT+ SU officers. Phipps' research found that the identity of the officers can often drive the issues prioritised by Students' Unions. Where policy is implemented by one team, it can often be deprioritised by subsequent officers and thus be no more than a token nod to equality & diversity. This is where representative structures are vital to ensuring the meaningful inclusion of all voices to ensure Students' Union representatives are not just advocating for their own views but those of the entire college (Bols, 2020). This would also help to ensure that minority voices are not silenced by the louder, more dominant voices (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006) within the student body. We can therefore learn from this that representativeness is not just about the identity of student representatives but how effectively these individuals represent the voices of other students.

Problematising this scenario, Flint & O'Hara (2013, p. 14) point towards the importance of ensuring that Students' Unions can access the voice of the "*silent majority*", noting the relatively small proportion of students who typically engage in SU representation structures. Bryson (2014) argues that this can be achieved through collective representation, where all members of the community are empowered to engage in these structures. However, this is caveated by highlighting the distance between sabbatical officers and the thousands of students they represent, particularly in large institutions. This distance is further heightened where SU officer teams are not as diverse as the student body they represent. For example, whilst working-class students can feel empowered when they hear SUs advocating for their interests, they can also feel disenfranchised if the only voices they hear speaking on these issues are middle-class students (Glazzard, 2017). Closing the gaps between SU officers and the students they represent means ensuring that representative structures are inclusive and that students from all demographics are empowered and able to engage within these structures.

Where they do not believe that their interests are being effectively represented, some cohorts may organise externally to the SU. Some contemporary examples of this include the response to UK tuition fee increases in the early 2010s. Fuelled by anger at their treatment by Government, students organised on campus occupations and protests. Salter & Boyce-Kay

(2011) recall the tension between many of these groups and their Students' Union officers, whom they believed were providing ineffective opposition on this issue, hence organising action outside of formal SU structures. Over the last decade, the decolonise movement has grown across UK universities, led mainly by black and ethnic minority students (Gebrial, 2018). Although many Students' Unions, including the national union, NUS UK, campaign actively on this issue (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancioğlu, 2019), one might wonder whether the distrust expressed by many activists during the anti-fees movement is echoed by those involved in the decolonise movement. Developing trust and credibility amongst their membership is pivotal to ensuring that Students' Unions continue to be viewed as the legitimate structure through which activism is organised.

Whilst there is limited scholarly research on the role of Students' Unions in supporting activism by black and ethnic minority students, Stevenson et al. (2019) note that these cohorts often feel unsupported in addressing the discrimination they face. Furthermore, many of these students can be unfairly labelled as troublemakers when they engage in activism or self-advocacy – echoing the experience of black and ethnic minority students in US colleges mobilising against the on-campus discrimination they face (Linder et al., 2019). Addressing this challenge requires Students' Unions to build trust with black and ethnic minority students so they can remove the burden that self-advocacy places on these students. In the context of both the Decolonise and Black Lives Matter movements (Lobo, 2020), there is scope for SUs to harness the anger of their students. This will entail critically reviewing how their structures may previously have failed black and ethnic minority students and addressing these shortcomings.

5. Considerations for the future.

In enhancing their engagement with minority groups, an essential first step is for SUs to track and monitor engagement (Bols, 2017). In doing so, they should aim to identify the student cohorts they are failing to engage, the reasons for this and actions they can take to address it. Flint and O'Hara (2013) caution against adopting representative structures uncritically and expecting all student groups to fit into these – instead, Students' Unions should aim to engage directly with these students to design mechanisms that work for them. One such example of this is the work carried out at the University of Winchester to develop representation networks for underrepresented groups and working with these students to co-create actions that will improve their engagement with the college and the SU (Islam, Burnett & Collins, 2021). Engaging

proactively with underrepresented cohorts sends a clear message that the SU is there for all students and that their voice matters.

Building upon this idea, Museus et al. (2020) argue that the development of peer networks creates a safe space where students feel more comfortable discussing the challenges they face, knowing that they are surrounded by people who understand what they are going through. This model is already in place in many Students' Unions and has been central to NUS UK's liberation work over the last decade (Day & Dickinson, 2018). Thomas and Jones (2007) and Islam et al. (2021) recommend that Students' Unions work in partnership with their institutions to engage underrepresented cohorts, recognising their shared interest in ensuring all student voices are heard within the institution. In Ireland and the UK, increased attention is being paid to equality, diversity and inclusion issues in higher education through initiatives such as Advance HE's Athena Swan, and Race and Equality Charters – though much work is still to be done in further embedding a culture of inclusion for staff and student from a range of identities and fully addressing racism and exclusion that takes place on campus (Royal Irish Academy & British Council, 2020).

Of course, the practical barriers that many minority students face in engaging with their Students' Union must be addressed if this is to be effective. This might take the form of increased use of online events and training (Stuart et al., 2009; Bols, 2020). COVID-19 has required SUs to pivot most of their services, including representation online – continuing this practice may enable access to SU structures for students previously unable to do so. Finally, SUs must offer support to all representatives – including sabbatical officers in effectively representing the voices of all students, particularly minority groups (Bols 2017; Lewis & Struetzel, 2019; Museus et al., 2020). Doing so allows representatives to understand both the unique challenges and commonalities across numerous minority student groups. One such example is the *'Representing Diversity'* programme piloted by the National Student Engagement Programme [NStEP] (NStEP, 2021) which has been rolled out to all Irish HEIs participating in NStEP from Autumn 2021. Given the limited number of sabbatical officer roles in every Students' Union (Bryson, 2014), inclusive representation structures play a pivotal role in ensuring that the issues facing students on the ground are heard and acted upon by their elected representatives. While this paper largely draws on evidence from the UK higher education sector, the points explored are equally relevant to Irish higher education given the many similarities between both sectors,

particularly in the organisation of Students' Unions. The evidence gathered highlights the need for further research within the context of Irish Higher Education - one such potential lens could be exploration of the representation of student cohorts named in the National Access Plan and how this impacts upon access and participation activity within institutions.

6. Final conclusions.

As the student population continues to diversify, Students' Unions must recognise the unique challenges that many of their students face and how this might influence their engagement or otherwise with the SU. As Saubert (2014, p. 131) reminds us, "*there is not a single mould in which all students can be placed*". Recognising this diversity means ensuring that mechanisms are in place to capture the experiences of all members of the student community and avoiding tokenism or one size fits all approaches that often favour the voices of more dominant student groups. In doing so, Students' Unions must honestly evaluate their structures and consider how they can create structures better suited to the needs of underrepresented cohorts. Increased diversity amongst SU officers is not sole evidence of a more inclusive and representative Students' Union, but it can help to empower students from these groups. There is limited up-to-date research on the identity of SU officers, but anecdotal evidence suggests that equality and diversity is a priority area for many SUs (Day and Dickinson, 2018; Royal Irish Academy & British Council, 2020) and that this is beginning to be reflected in the identity of SU leaders. Though they may be perceived as '*hard to reach*', minority student cohorts generally express favourable views of Students' Unions (Rath, 2020) and do wish to engage with them, but face numerous barriers in doing so. Overcoming this challenge will require rethinking the way SUs reach out to students, moving away from a dependency on on-campus interaction and working with these cohorts to co-create inclusive approaches to engagement. However, with a recognised track record of leading the way on many equality and diversity issues, Students' Unions are not starting from a blank slate.

7. References.

Bhambra, G.K., Gebrial, D. & Nişancıoğlu, K. (2018). Introduction: Decolonising the University? In G.K. Bhambra, D.Gebrial, & K. Nişancıoğlu (eds). *Decolonising the University*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 1-18.

- Bols, A. (2017). Enhancing Student Representation. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*, 3(1), 81-89.
- Bols, A. (2020). The changing nature and importance of student representation. In T. Lowe & Y. El Hakim (eds.). *A Handbook for Student Engagement in Higher Education: Theory into Practice*. London: Routledge, pp. 66-82.
- Brooks, R., Byford, K. & Sela, K. (2014.) The changing role of students' unions within contemporary higher education. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 30(2), 165-181. DOI: 10.1080/02680939.2014.924562
- Brooks, R., Byford, K. & Sela, K. (2015a). Inequalities in students' union leadership: the role of social networks. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(9), 1204-1218. DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2015.1039971
- Brooks, R., Byford, K. & Sela, K. (2015b). The spaces of UK students' unions: extending the critical geographies of the university campus. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 17(4), 471-490. DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2015.1089585
- Brown, K.R. & Broido, E.M. (2020). Engaging Students with Disabilities. In S.J. Quaye, S.R. Harper & S.L. Pendakur (eds.). *Student Engagement in Higher Education*. (3RD Ed) New York: Routledge, pp. 237-256.
- Bryson, C. (2014). Reflections, and considerations about the future of student engagement. In C. Bryson (ed.). *Understanding and Developing Student Engagement*. London: Routledge, pp. 231-240.
- Butcher, J. (2015). 'Shoe-horned and Sidelined?' *Challenges for Part-Time Learners in the New HE Landscape*. York: Higher Education Academy. Available: http://oro.open.ac.uk/43768/1/_UserData_Documents_jsb35_Desktop_Challenges%20for%20part-time%20learners.pdf
- Campbell, D.E. & Wolbrecht, C. (2006). See Jane run: Women politicians as role models for adolescents. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(2), 233-245. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00402
- Chapman, A., Parmar, D. & Trotter, E. (2007). An evaluation of the first year experience from

the mature students' perspective: a multi-institutional comparison. *Practitioner Research in Higher Education*, 1(1), 15-19.

<https://ojs.cumbria.ac.uk/index.php/TEAN/article/view/4/3>

Day, M. & Dickinson, J. (2018). *David versus Goliath: The Past, Present and Future of Students' Unions in the UK* (HEPI Report 111). Higher Education Policy Institute.

Available: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/HEPI-StudentsUnions-Report-111-FINAL-EMBARGOED1.pdf>

Flint, A. & O'Hara, M. (2013). Communities of Practice and 'student voice': engaging with student representatives at the faculty level. *Student Engagement and Experience Journal*,

2(1). Available: [Communities of practice and 'student voice': engaging with student representatives at the faculty level - Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive \(shu.ac.uk\)](http://www.sheffieldhallam.ac.uk/research-archives/communities-of-practice-and-student-voice-engaging-with-student-representatives-at-the-faculty-level)

Frith, L. & Wilson, A. (2014). Returning to learning: what are the academic development needs of mature and part-time students? What works to support and retain these students?

Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education, 7. Available:

<https://journal.aldinhe.ac.uk/index.php/jldhe/article/view/140>

Gibson, A., Hazelkorn, E. & Harkin, S. (2015). From Massification to Globalisation: Reflections on the Transformation of Irish Higher Education. In K. Rafter & M. O'Brien (eds). *The State of Transition*. Dublin: New Island Books, pp. 235-260.

Glazzard, D. (2017). Looking for people like me: The barriers and benefits of Students' Union participation for working class students in an elite institution. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership & Change*, 3(1), 306-319.

Gebrial, D. (2018) Rhodes must fall: Oxford and Movements for Change. In G.K. Bhambra, D.Gebrial, & K. Nişancioğlu (eds). *Decolonising the University*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 19-36.

Goddard, H. (2017). Reframing 'hard to reach' student engagement. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*, 3(1), 68-70.

Hazelkorn, E., Gibson, A. & Harkin, S. (2015). From Massification to Globalisation: Reflections

on the Transformation of Irish Higher Education. In K. Rafter (ed.). *The State in Transition*. Dublin: New Island, pp. 235 - 260.

- Hazell, W. (2021, February 16th). Government to fine student unions for 'no platforming', as Gavin Williamson announces 'free speech champion'. *i news*. Available: <https://inews.co.uk/news/education/government-fine-student-unions-no-platforminggavin-williamson-free-speech-champion-873273>
- Humphrey, O & Lowe, T. (2017.) Exploring how a 'Sense of Belonging' is facilitated at different stages of the student journey in Higher Education. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*, 3(1), 172-188.
- Islam, M., Burnett, T.L. & Collins, S.L. (2021). Trilateral Partnership: An institution and students' union collaborative partnership project to support underrepresented student groups. *International Journal for Students as Partners*, 5(1), 76-85.
- Kandiko, C.B. & Mawer, M. (2013) *Student Expectations and Perceptions of Higher Education*. London: Kings Institute. Available: https://www.academia.edu/38692124/Student_Expectations_and_Perceptions_of_Higher_Education
- Kouzoukas, G. (2020). *gaging First-Generation Students*. In S.J. Quaye, S.R. Harper & S.L. Pendakur (eds.). *Student Engagement in Higher Education*. (3RD Ed). New York: Routledge, pp. 237-256.
- Lewis, J. & Struetzel, T. (2019). *It's Time to Bring the Student Voice into Debates about Race*. *WonkHE*. Available: <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/its-time-to-bring-the-student-voice-intodebates-about-race>
- Linder, C., Quaye, S.J., Lange, A.C., Roberts, R.E., Lacy, R.M. & Okello, W.K. (2019). "A Student Should Have the Privilege of Just Being a Student": Student Activism as Labour. *The Review of Higher Education*, 42(3), 37-62.

- Lobo, A. (2020). *This is what Leadership Looks Like on Race and Racism in Universities*. Available: *WonkHE*. <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/this-is-what-leadership-looks-like-on-race-and-racism-in-universities>
- Lowe, T. (2019.) The Campus Bubble: The Best and Worst Part of Inclusivity in Higher Education. In K. Kashir (ed.). *Inclusivity in Higher Education*. London: Inspired by Learning
- Lowe, T. & Dunne, E. (2017). Setting the scene for the REACT programme: Aims, challenges and the way ahead. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*, 3(1), 24-39.
- Luescher-Mamashala, T. (2012). Student representation in university decision making: good reasons, a new lens? *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(10), 1442- 1456.
- Marie, J., MacKenzie, S., Rowett, S. & Wright, M. (2017). Staff perceptions of 'Hard to Reach'. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*, 3(1), 286- 292.
- McVitty, D. & Morris, K. (2012). *Never Too Late to Learn: Mature students in Higher Education*, London: NUS & Million Plus. Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301683614_Never_Too_Late_To_Learn_Mature_students_in_higher_education
- Museus, S.D., Griffin, K.A. & Quaye, S.J. (2020). Engaging Students of Colour. In S.J. Quaye, S.R. Harper & S.L. Pendakur (eds.). *Student Engagement in Higher Education*. [3RD Ed]. New York: Routledge, pp. 237-256.
- NStEP (2021). Student-led 'Representing Diversity' pilot project complete! [New item] <https://studentengagement.ie/2021/04/09/student-led-representing-diversity-pilotproject-complete>
- Phipps, C. (2020). "We already do enough around equality & diversity": Action taken by student union officers to promote LGBT+ inclusion in university sport. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 37(4), 310-318.
- Rath, V. (2020). *The Social Engagement Experiences of Disabled Students in Higher Education in Ireland*. [Unpublished PhD thesis]. Trinity College Dublin. Available:

http://www.tara.tcd.ie/bitstream/handle/2262/95415/PhD_VR_Final_26.02.2021%20Upload_Final%20V2%20MMYR_Appendixedt.pdf?sequence=3

Rudduck, J & Fielding, M. (2006). Student voice and the perils of popularity. *Educational Review*, 58(2), 219-231.

Royal Irish Academy & British Council (2020). *Race, Ethnicity and Change in Higher Education*. Available:

https://www.ria.ie/sites/default/files/race_ethnicity_and_change_in_higher_education_web.pdf

Salter, L. & Boyce-Kay, J. (2011). The UWE Student Occupation. *Social Movement Studies*, 10(4), 423-429.

Saubert, S. (2014). Cross-cultural experiences: Exploring engagement as an international postgraduate. In C. Bryson (ed.) *Understanding and Developing Student Engagement*. London: Routledge, pp. 130-138.

Shaw, C., Humphrey, O., Atvars, T. & Sims, S. (2017). Who are they and how to engage them: A summary of the REACT systematic literature review of the 'Hard to Reach' in Higher Education. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*, 3(1), 51-64.

Sims, S., Luebsen, W. & Guggiari-Peel, C. (2017). Exploring the role of co-curricular student engagement participations in student retention, attainment and improving inclusivity. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*, 3(1), 93- 109.

Smith, J. (2008). *Mature Learners: A Synthesis of Research*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Available: https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehedocumentmanager/documents/hea/private/wp_mature_learners_synthesis_on_template_updated_090310_1568036816.pdf

Stevenson, J., O'Mahony, J., Khan, O., Ghaffar, F. & Stiell, B. (2019.) *Understanding and Overcoming the Challenges of Targeting Students from Underrepresented and Disadvantaged Ethnic Backgrounds*. Report to the Office for Students. Available:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/d21cb263-526d-401c-bc74-299c748e9ecd/ethnicity-targeting-research-report.pdf>

Stuart, M., Lido, C., Morgan, J. & May, S. (2009). *Student Diversity, Extra-curricular Activities and Perceptions of Graduate Outcomes*. York: Higher Education Academy. Available: <https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/3232/>

Thomas, L. & Jones, R. (2017). *Student Engagement in the Context of Commuter Students*. London: NUS. Available: <https://lizthomasassociates.co.uk/projects/2018/Commuter%20student%20engagement.pdf>