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News

Cowen launches €486m DIT project

Sean FlynnWed, Sep 22, 2010, 01:00

A €486 million project which will give Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) a new campus – while helping to regenerate a large swathe of north Dublin – was formally launched by Taoiseach Brian Cowen yesterday.

The 70-acre site, bordering Grangegorman, Phibsboro, Broadstone and Manor Street, will also house purpose-built mental health facilities and a primary school run by Dublin 7 Educate Together for 400 pupils.

DIT, one of the largest third-level institutions in the country, is currently spread throughout the city centre in 39 separate sites. With 20,000 full- and part-time students, it accounts for close to 10 per cent of all students in higher education in Ireland.

Last week, it gained a rank of 347 in the *Times*Higher world rankings, a very creditable performance for a college of its type.

The new campus will house about 70 per cent of DIT's activities by 2016. In its new home, DIT should be better placed to secure its long-term demand for university status. However, the forthcoming Hunt report on higher education is lukewarm in its support for more universities in the Republic.

Some 450 full-time construction jobs will be created for a 10-year period during the development of the Grangegorman site. In addition, more than 1,100 full-time jobs are promised on completion of the works.

Plans for the site were first announced almost a decade ago. At the time, it was thought much of the project could be funded by selling off DIT colleges. But the downturn in property prices means more of the funding will come from the exchequer.

Minister for Education Mary Coughlan said yesterday: "The role of higher education was never more important to society than it is today. We need to maintain Ireland's position in the top quarter of OECD countries, and this campus will help us achieve this goal.

"What is being created here at Grangegorman is the kind of learning environment that will enhance the development of every student enrolling in DIT."

DIT president Prof Brian Norton said: "The institute has been an integral part of this city for 125 years, not just as an educational provider, but as a social and cultural resource. By consolidating our activities on a single campus, we can continue to deliver student-centred education, industry-related research and technology transfer to future generations."

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