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Marie O'Halloran

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News

Teachers, Lowry condemn proposals for institutes

Marie O'Halloran

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EDUCATION:THE PROPOSALS to merge the three Dublin-based Institutes of Technology (DIT) and close the Tipperary Institute (TI) have been condemned by teachers and by Independent TD Michael Lowry, who supports the Government.

Teachers Union of Ireland deputy general secretary Annette Dolan said it would “truly be a case of destroying the economic engine for a few drops of oil”.

The recommendations, if implemented, “would sound a death knell for overseas investment in Ireland,” she said. “These cuts would devastate third-level education and send out a message that we as a nation do not value education.” It would “be completely counter-productive to any genuine efforts of economic stimulation to scupper the development of ‘fourth-level’ postgraduate and postdoctora research.”

She said in the current employment situation workers needed to upskill and retain “whether they are unskilled, solicitors or architects, and the DIT is ideal to do this”. She said some 850 lecturers were employed full-time by the institutes, with a further 500 on part-time or short-term contracts.

The proposals include moving all three Dublin-based institutions to the 15-acre Tallaght site and abandoning the plan to move all 34 city centre-based locations to 67 acres in Grangegorman. The proposals “didn’t even make sense on paper”, Ms Dolan said. DIT “would have to retain many of its city locations due to space restrictions, which would defeat the entire purpose of relocation”.

Mr Lowry said the report was only a recommendation and not a final political decision and he vowed to do everything he could to protect the future of the Tipperary Institute.

“The recommendations by this group come as a blow to the college, but the onus is on us now to convince the Government of the benefits of TI to the region and to the Irish exchequer in the long term.”

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