

ADDRESS BY THE HEAD OF FACULTY OF ENGINEERING & SCIENCE, MICHAEL LOFTUS, AT THE AWARDS EVENT OF 28 NOVEMBER, 2013.

- ❖ Students and graduates of CIT
- ❖ Members of the Governing Body
- ❖ Sponsors and friends from industry
- ❖ Institute staff
- ❖ Distinguished guests
- ❖ Ladies and Gentlemen

The Faculty of Engineering & Science is delighted to see you all here this evening, participating in this event honouring the achievements of our students and graduates.

On behalf of the Faculty, I wish to congratulate all who have received awards here this evening and to wish you well in the future in your chosen careers. I know that many of you will go on to work in industry either here locally or further afield. Others amongst you will continue to study and become involved in postgraduate programmes and research. Regardless of which options you choose, I believe that you will be excellently equipped to deal with today's world.

In these challenging times, my colleagues in the Faculty are very conscious of the need to provide new opportunities to meet the needs of our students, graduates, researchers, start-up companies and industry collaborators.

During the past academic year, we have completed a range of new developments including the following:

- The Architecture Factory: a highly innovative development through which students can learn in a very free, open and inspiring space
- The CREATE Centre: the Centre for Research in Advanced Therapeutic Engineering which will collaborate with industry to provide therapeutic solutions in life sciences, biomedical engineering and photonics to meet the needs of individuals
- The launch of new online offerings from the Department of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering, which are proving very popular both locally and further afield
- The launch of new courses in Environmental Engineering and Craft Technology
- The implementation of new Springboard initiatives, delivered in innovative ways and aimed specifically at helping people get back to work – 20 graduates have recently been snapped up by a major local company
- The establishment of new research and course development work in our Department of Mathematics, culminating in the development of the type of data science programme required by today's labour market and the Department's first PhD graduate being conferred this year
- The launch of our MSc in Interior Architecture
- The achievement of ever-deepening engagement with industry, creating new opportunities in areas such as environment and energy through collaborative initiatives
- The launch of Phase II of our Water Systems and Services Innovation Centre, in conjunction with Cork City and County Councils, aimed at making Cork a centre of excellence in the globally relevant area of water technology, innovation and job creation – recently winning €260k in commercialisation funding for an innovative project
- The organisation of our Engineering Roadshow, which has toured County Cork, attracting hundreds of students, parents, guardians, teachers and guidance counsellors, and providing attendees with the knowledge they require when choosing a course in Higher Education – the final event will be held in CIT at 7pm on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> January – all welcome!
- The continued expansion of our Cloud Computing work, now being delivered online to hundreds of students around the globe
- The deepening of our international linkages in Brazil and Canada as well as the continued development of existing links with India and China
- The conferring of a significant number of PhD students across all areas of the Faculty

We have seen students and graduates of the Faculty continue to win awards at national and international levels across all areas of our work in recent times. A particularly pleasing aspect of these successes is the manner in which our students and graduates have put *knowledge to work* by using a combination of technical expertise and business knowhow to complete complex and innovative projects which have application in the real world.

Our work with the Rubicon Centre, CIT's top class business incubation centre which has produced more than 250 start-up businesses in the last 15 years, attracted approx. €100M in investment and now employing approx. 2,500 employees, has continued to gain momentum. Many of our students are now getting the opportunity to gain experience in new business start-ups to hone their skills to create the new businesses and jobs that Ireland so badly needs today.

All of these developments have been completed at a time when we have had to deal with significant funding challenges arising as a consequence of national economic circumstances.

In this context, I must pay tribute to the outstanding leadership shown by my colleagues in the Faculty of Engineering & Science. They have consistently developed and delivered programmes and initiatives of an excellent standard and I am indebted to them for their efforts. Their commitment to their students and to the pursuit of excellence is exemplary.

We are particularly pleased to have present with us today friends and colleagues from industry. Cooperation and engagement with industry has been a differentiating characteristic of the CIT educational experience. Through good times and bad, local businesses have continued to work with us, providing placement opportunities for our students, providing advice and feedback regarding new course proposals and developments, helping shape our research vision and activity. In turn, we have continued to develop graduates who make an immediate contribution in the work place but, also, who are equipped with the broad base of education so important to long term career and social development. We are indebted to the sponsors who are present here this evening and we look forward to continuing to develop and deepen our relationships with you over time.

We are also particularly pleased to have with us this evening members of the Magner family. Pat, Deirdre and family, thank you most sincerely for your ongoing support of CIT and our students through the annual bursary awarded in honour of your daughter, Clíona.

This is the tenth year in which the award will be presented. Its impact has gone from strength to strength and has been hugely beneficial to those who have been supported by it. We sincerely hope that the establishment of the award has succeeded in the way you had originally envisaged. We know that our graduates will continue to understand and cherish the award in line with the values that inspired its creation. Thank you.

More generally, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like to congratulate all of you, our award winners, on your great achievements. We wish you well in your future careers and we look forward to staying in contact with you in the years to come and to celebrating your successes. To this end, I encourage you to join our online networking group for the Faculty using the LinkedIn system and I wish to extend an invitation to all of you to join with the hundreds of graduates from all over the world who use this system to stay in touch with us and with each other, to network and to find jobs and opportunities.

In addition, I wish to congratulate your parents, partners, supporters and families on this special day. The academic journey is seldom travelled alone and without your support, many would not have seen it through to the end.

To conclude, I would like to voice my appreciation of the efforts of all involved in the organisation of today's event. Norma Welch, our Faculty Administrator, has done Trojan work in relation to the planning and organisation of today's event. She has been ably assisted by Denise O'Keeffe, Elaine Burke and Deirdre Burke. The Institute's catering staff led by Geraldine O'Sullivan have provided us with an excellent service. Frank Hanley has organised the various facilities that we are using this evening. Barry O'Sullivan has organised our sound systems and photography. And Philip O'Reilly, from our IT Services Department, has organised the audiovisuals. Perhaps we might give them a round of applause.

Many thanks for your attention. Enjoy the rest of the evening.