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CIT EXTENDED CAMPUS : Case Studies on Engaged and Entrepreneurial Universities

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CIT EXTENDED CAMPUS

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Case Studies on engaged and entrepreneurial Universities

SUMMARY

In 2011 the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland published its forward looking document 'National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030'. That document focused on restructuring the higher education system as a key action in ensuring Ireland's Economic Development and the creation of an 'Innovation Island'. The Strategy document stated that *'Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions'*. The same document proposes the designation of some institutes of technology as Technological Universities and emphasises that the new universities should have *'very strong links with enterprise to create programmes informed by enterprise needs, co-taught by practitioners and academics, with constant renewal and change to ensure relevance... and ...a particular focus on meeting the national research agenda of supporting local and regional small and medium-sized enterprises'*.

In response to this national context, and building on its leadership of two inter-institutional projects at the interface between academia and enterprise, Cork Institute of Technology established the CIT Extended Campus in November 2011. The Extended Campus model is unique in the Irish higher education system as a single point of contact for external organisations seeking to interact with academics and researchers in CIT for graduate formation, workforce development or research and innovation. It provides a stimulus for interaction through case studies and exemplars intended to generate the 'pull' from within the enterprise sector. By exploring existing successful interactions it supports the development of good practice pathways and shared institutional learning. The Extended Campus acts as a focal point for the sharing of information and practice on engagement and external organisations and contacts in order to support and contribute to institutional strategy and knowledge.

An important part of the development of the model is the recognition that learning happens outside of higher education institutions and that the workplace itself is a valuable and valid centre for learning. Integrating the recognition of prior learning into course development as well as workplace learning, together form an important part of the two-way relationships with enterprise that are stimulated and supported by the Extended Campus. This case study identifies the overall objectives of the Extended Campus and the activities that have been undertaken to date. It lists some of the achievements and impacts at this early stage and details the success factors as well as some of the difficulties that can be expected in an initiative such as this.

BACKGROUND

The changing landscape of higher education in Ireland and elsewhere, as outlined in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, presents challenges and opportunities. In this context, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), in collaboration with the Institute of Technology Tralee, is in the process of seeking redesignation as a Technological University (TU). The vision is to establish, by 2017, the Munster Technological University (MTU) which will be a leader in defining the unique offerings of Technological Universities in Ireland. The unified institution will adopt a single coherent strategy based on the concept of the 'knowledge ecosystem'. This will be at the heart of the institutional culture. It will integrate the key fundamental pillars of MTU: education, research **and engagement**. In essence, the boundaries of MTU will be permeable; extending into the community through its services and drawing on that community for its direction.

It is in this context of a changing landscape and the move toward Technological University status that the CIT Extended Campus model is described herein. It is anticipated that effective two-way engagement with local, regional and national organizations will be a differentiating factor of a successful TU and that the Extended Campus model will be an important part of the engagement framework of the larger merged entity.

Cork Institute of Technology is an Irish higher education institution with a student population of some 9000 whole time equivalent third level students, and incorporating Faculties of Science and Engineering, and Business and Humanities, as well as Colleges of Art and Music, and the National Maritime College of Ireland. Working with enterprise partners has always been an important part of Cork Institute of Technology's mission. This has included: ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and current for local regional and national employers, working in partnership with industry experts to develop applied research solutions and supporting new and emerging workforce reskilling and upskilling needs. Despite having longstanding relationships with employers, many of the interactions were conducted as separate, distinct activities with little overview of the totality of engagement interactions across the institution. Anecdotally, this situation led to Heads of Academic Departments passing each other in the car park of local multinational companies – neither knowing what the other one was doing there. Moreover, from an external perspective there was no focused clear message for potential partners about what they could hope to achieve from seeking a partnership with CIT, nor a clearly visible pathway through which they could access the full range of engagement opportunities. Often the response to a particular query depended very much on who, in the institution, answered the question, and the difficulty for the outside organization was in knowing who to ask and what to ask. When one particular part of the institution had a successful interaction with an enterprise organization, this knowledge was often lost to the organization as a whole and not used to build a broader strategic relationship or contribute to organizational learning.

Between 2006 and 2014 Cork Institute of Technology had an opportunity to contribute to the development of practice in higher education engagement with external enterprises and organizations through a nationally funded initiative. Under a competitive bid process through the Strategic Innovation Fund of the Higher Education Authority, CIT successfully proposed a project which would see a number of higher education institutions, both universities and institutes of technology, work together to seek to establish a collective view of the breadth of interactions possible and to develop practices, processes and policies that would optimize the interaction for both the higher education and the enterprise partner. This project, which was led by CIT, entitled Roadmap for Employment-Academic Partnership or (REAP), contributed to a considerable furthering of the discourse on academic-enterprise relations in Ireland and

has resulted in a number of useful guidelines for practice as well as an improved understanding of what can be achieved through partnership and the commitments required for successful partnerships to be developed and maintained. The project team worked closely with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the Irish Business Employers Confederation (IBEC) and has evolved into a National network for good practice.

The proposal and implementation of the CIT Extended Campus model as described in this case study built directly on the strategic importance of engagement for CIT, the knowledge, experiences and expertise gained through the leadership of the REAP project and the move toward Technological University status.

OBJECTIVES

Building on CIT's long history of, and commitment to, engagement with local, regional, national and international employers and on the practitioner knowledge gained through the REAP project, this initiative sought to:

- Make it easier for external organizations to engage in mutually beneficial interactions with CIT academics and researchers
- Develop a clear view of the extent and depth of existing and desirable engagement interactions to feed into institutional strategy and decision-making
- Stimulate more interactions and measurably support regional economic development
- Ensure that the variety of interactions with companies are collated and built on to develop broader supportive long-term mutually beneficial partnerships

RESPONSIBILITY

Primary responsibility at an implementation and operational level for the initiative described herein lay with the Head of the CIT Extended Campus and the Extended Campus team.

At a strategic and policy level responsibility lay with the CIT President and the Institute Executive Board.

While the CIT Extended Campus is a facilitator and an enabler of enhanced interactions between elements of the institute and external organisations, the individuals, academic and administrative units involved will continue to be the owners of the individual interaction activities.

IMPLEMENTATION & FUNDING

STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

In Ireland, the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Department of Education and Skills 2010) makes it clear, that the engagement agenda is no longer an optional element of a Higher Education Institution's mission. At the same time, there is a real need for higher education in Ireland to more effectively support regional economic development in a difficult

employment climate. Given these climactic conditions and building on the outcomes of national projects at the interface between higher education and enterprise and international best practice, a decision was taken by CIT to develop a unique unit to support and stimulate engagement interactions and to contribute to the engagement strategy of the institution. These actions were informed by the underlying strategic importance of Technological University designation.

A comprehensive review of international models and infrastructures was undertaken and in late 2011 the CIT Extended Campus was launched. Despite a national situation which made resource allocation within education very difficult, the unit was resourced and the work commenced with both outward facing and inward facing activities.

The outward-facing activities included:

- Public launch of the CIT Extended Campus
- Establishment of the CIT Extended Campus as a single point of contact for the full range of potential interactions
- In depth review of the web of existing interactions with a small number of companies
- Development of easy-to-read exemplars to highlight the potential interactions
- Website, twitter, newsletter development, event diary

The inward facing activities were:

- Regular meetings with leaders of academic/research units
- Collation of engagement information, organizations, individuals, activities
- Development of customer relationship management (CRM) solution
- Draft operational structures and reasonable timelines for responses to queries

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The CIT Extended Campus operates as a unit within the Institute and reports to the Vice President for External Affairs. At one level, monitoring and evaluation is possible through quantifiable indicators such as webpage hits, levels of queries and demand for interaction activities. More qualitative evaluation is planned through focus groups and analysis of awareness as well as exploration of effectiveness of marketing and outreach activities.

Simultaneously the Higher Education Authority has developed, very recently, a holistic 'profiling' mechanism for higher education institutions and these developments have contributed to the discourse on suitable indicators for levels and depth of engagement interactions with enterprise. This process has resulted in the development of an institutional 'Compact' or agreement with the HEA, which sets goals and targets in the context of each institution's strategic plan. The CIT Extended Campus was in a position to contribute to the development of CIT's compact and this provided an opportunity to set targets for the Extended Campus team.

Some of the objectives within the Compact to which the Extended Campus will be able to directly contribute include:

- Role of CIT as a practice leader in engagement with external organisations at local, national, and international level
- Enhanced opportunities for enterprise and community groups to engage with CIT in graduate formation
- Enhanced opportunities for enterprise and community groups to engage with CIT in employee development and lifelong learning

- Promote technology transfer activities and consolidate support mechanisms for enterprise start and development

Measurable success indicators within the Compact include:

- Number of flexible learners
- Number of courses delivered off-campus
- Number of host organisations for undergraduate placement students
- Number of industry-supported undergraduate projects
- Number of research projects involving an industry partner
- % of research income attributable to industry projects

SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

The main sustainability measure in the short term, is the allocation of staff to the initiative and the embedding of these principles of connected and informed engagement within the institute's Strategic Plan. There is also in development an Institute-wide Engagement Strategy which will feed into and form part of the Institute's Strategic Plan.

In the medium term the detailed consultation plan for the establishment of the MTU outlines the role of the Vice-President for Engagement within the new merged structure whose University-wide responsibilities include engagement strategy, enterprise relationship management, external service promotion and delivery and management of enterprise engagement structures. It also makes clear that: *'To achieve this coherent, client-centred approach the engagement activity will continue to provide a point of contact or an interface through which the various services can be accessed'*.

In the context of the development of the MTU it is likely that the CIT Extended Campus initiative will need to adapt and grow over the coming years.

COSTS

While this initiative has been building over the number of years since its launch, an estimate of the costs on an annual basis in terms of resource effort are as follows:

Senior Academic Staff Equivalent: 2 (1 Fulltime and 2 Part-time)

Administrative Staff Equivalent: 2

Marketing Executive: 1

Work Based Learning Development Officer: 1

Recognition of Prior Learning Support Officer: 1

In addition to this resource / time allocation the costs include the allocation of space – including meeting room and office space as well as general office equipment. General IT and phone resources as well as licences for a Customer Relationship Management system are required.

FUNDING.

The CIT Extended Campus as described in the case study is based on CIT's long-term commitment to engagement with enterprise partners and CIT's experience in leading the REAP project at the interface between academia and industry.

Funding for the REAP project, led by CIT, which stimulated and informed this initiative came from two main sources. Firstly, the Department of Education and Skills through the Higher Education Authority allocated approximately €4.055m funding to the project consortium between 2007 and 2014. In addition, the higher education partners matched this funding through the allocation of resources and time to the project. In total fifteen higher education institutions in Ireland received funding under the REAP project (and its predecessor the Education in Employment project).

Since its foundation, the staff of the CIT Extended Campus have also been responsible for the management, administration and reporting on the REAP project and network. The CIT Extended Campus, itself, is funded directly through the Cork Institute of Technology core funds. However, each of the individual interactions with enterprise is directly self-supporting. For instance, where a course is developed for and delivered to a particular company or organisation the full cost for the course is applied to that organisation. It is anticipated that the increase in these interactions will, over time, alleviate the costs of the unit to the core funding of the institute.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

OUTCOMES

The outcomes to date have been multifaceted – some intended and some unintended. In many cases it has become clear that considerable time and effort must be invested in building relationships with organizations before any real, tangible deliverable is achieved. A significant impact has been the linking of activities which relate to the formation of the graduate (such as course advisory boards and work placements) with the activities which support workforce development (such as continued professional development and short focused in-company learning) and with research and development activities (such as short research interactions, use of specialist equipment). From the perspective of the external organization, higher education tended to act as several different entities. By linking the information on these activities internally, we can seek to operate as ‘one institution’ externally and provide potential partners with clear examples of how we can work together.

However, it is clear that in these early stages of development the CIT Extended Campus model has been more successful in working with those parts of the institution which had already been more ‘engaged’ and interested in developing external links and that more effort will need to be expended on interactions beyond these ‘islands of activity’. As might be expected, there is still work to be done in convincing colleagues of the benefits of the Extended Campus approach in stimulating and enhancing engagement interactions.

Some short term concrete outcomes:

- Contact and interaction information shared and collated on CRM: 1,360 accounts in total, 2,530 individual contacts to date
- 1050 individuals on Newsletter mailing list
- 1400 Twitter followers
- 260 leads registered on CRM through phone, email, website
- 20 Case Study exemplars developed for web and print form

- 10 customized learning interactions facilitated for companies
- 20 in-company learning clinics have been facilitated to support individual and cohort upskilling needs identification

IMPACTS

Some short terms impacts include:

- Increased numbers of short, career-focused courses and customised courses
- Institute-wide coordination of responses to Government employment initiatives through the ICT Skills and Springboard schemes
- Development of work-based learning, in-company postgraduate certificate programme with American Chambers and the Higher Education Authority
- More part-time and workplace learners
- More undergraduate work-placement opportunities
- More streamlined facilitation of workplace interactions with academic departments and units
- CIT Extended Campus team member acts as representative of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) on the Bologna Follow-up Group: Recognition of Prior Learning Network
- Recognition of prior learning incorporated into work-related programme development
- Closer relationships with enterprise on the development of customised courses to meet regional economic needs. See example below:

Example of specific activity:

Soon after its establishment the CIT Extended Campus was able to support the innovative development of a specialized course in Data Analytics in response to national reports on skills needs which pointed to lack of qualified graduates with Data Science and Analytics qualifications. Nationally, the situation was that Ireland had a considerable unemployment rate but at the same time had a large number of unfilled jobs in ICT area. A Government initiative provided some funding for higher education institutions to develop new programmes that would support these skills needs. The course development was undertaken by internal experts in the Mathematics, Statistics and Computing disciplines.

The role of the Extended Campus was to facilitate the industry needs analysis and consultation sessions, provide practical information on validation of non-formal and informal learning where appropriate, support systems for work-based learning and to provide a good practice framework for the development of customized courses to meet specific industry needs. This framework includes the involvement of subject matter experts from the industry domain in the development and also the delivery of the courses, inclusion of the recognition of prior formal and non-formal learning and alignment of work-based learning opportunities where possible.

The specialized course in Data Analytics is now in its second year and has been very well-received by the local and national industry base.

Longer term impacts (internally)

- Institutional learning – identification and sharing of good practice
- Heightened awareness of importance of engagement with enterprise among CIT Staff
- Visibility, internally, of actual ongoing interactions – showcasing of good practice

- Greater consistency across the institute in terms of outcomes delivery in line with the Engagement Strategy

Longer term impacts (externally)

- Awareness of CIT as engaged institution (through sustained interactions with Chambers of Commerce, industry representative groups, industry networking events etc.)
- Coherent pathway for external organizations to explore potential engagements across a broad spectrum
- 'One institution' approach has meant that companies don't need to know in advance which 'discipline area' or academic department is relevant for their query – we can match them to a multi-disciplinary team where appropriate

INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

The main beneficiaries are the external enterprises who are provided with a dedicated contact point and pathways to interact more easily with CIT staff, students and researchers. In addition the internal academic departments and units benefit from increased engagement activity and enhanced profile.

Part of the next phase will be to clearly integrate the CIT Extended Campus into the regional innovation system. The Extended Campus team are working with local and regional enterprise boards, Chambers of Commerce and with Enterprise Ireland and the IDA as well as the individual enterprises to ensure that the opportunities, practice and the activities are well-understood and relevant. Another objective is to work to benchmark this activity and seek to measure the real and potential impact on regional economic development of higher education engagement generally and this specific initiative.

AWARDS / RECOGNITION

1. National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
The National Strategy document published by the Department of Education and Skills in January 2011 specifically mentions the REAP project and the findings that ... 'participants have quickly recognised the need for institutional change, as exemplified in a recent strategy document on engagement produced by Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) which identifies 'a clear need to create a single identity for CIT as an 'engaged institute' and to support and streamline an end-to-end service model which proactively identifies regional needs and delivers a coordinated Institute response to same'.
http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national_strategy_for_higher_education_2030.pdf
2. REAP Project as Example of Practice
The REAP project which provided the foundation for this case study was chosen as an example of good practice in University-Business Collaboration and published on the EU website as part of the DG Education and Culture study on the cooperation between higher education institutions and public private organisations in Europe <http://www.ub-cooperation.eu/pdf/casestudyreport.pdf>
3. Success Story from the IBEC Agenda newsletter
IBEC represents Irish business; home grown, multinational, big and small, spanning every sector of the economy. The organisation and its sector associations, work with government and policy makers nationally and internationally, to shape business

conditions and drive economic growth. It also provides a wide range of professional services direct to members. In July 2013 IBEC published a newsletter article on the CIT Extended Campus model and the opportunities for industry to engage with higher education <http://agenda.ibec.ie/16f7romvdtz>

4. Recognition of CIT's leadership of practice and policy in RPL
Consultation processes with QQI around the current situation on RPL and significant contribution by Deirdre Goggin of CIT Extended Campus, to the Ireland Country Report for CEDEFOP, as well as representation at National level on the European RPL network.

LESSONS LEARNED

PRIMARY CHALLENGES

Developing a new institute-wide approach to engagement and seeking to connect the activities which lead to graduate formation, workforce development and research and innovation within a higher education institution presents some significant challenges. Higher education institutions tend to organise themselves around discipline areas and this initiative requires a cross-institution and cross-disciplinary perspective in order to optimise the experience for the external partner. In a time of budgetary challenges in education and staff shortages, as well as growing numbers of undergraduate students, this type of change is difficult to champion.

Raising awareness internally of the benefits of the CIT Extended Campus model required exemplars of success to demonstrate how this model would work for the academic units. Raising awareness externally among the existing and potential enterprise partners of the range of beneficial interactions with CIT and the opportunities to grow and develop the relationship was particularly difficult at a time when organisations were reducing their training and development budget and operating under very strict headcount limitations.

It was also a challenge to promote a concept of engagement which is more complex than a simple 'service-type' arrangement. Working with higher education requires resource and time commitments on behalf of the external enterprise partner and this is not always a welcome message.

In summary, the challenges were similar for CIT and for the external organisations, resource constraints, staffing and time constraints and the difficulty in articulating and exemplifying the immediate or short term gains.

While these challenges are ongoing and the team are very aware of them, it has become easier to demonstrate benefits as there are existing success stories to illustrate the opportunities. However the team is aware of the continuing challenge of demonstrating value to all of our colleagues and not just those who are already working with the Extended Campus.

The initiative has not taken place in isolation and one of the significant challenges and indeed opportunities, is the underlying change process within the higher education system in Ireland. A feature of this change is the application for Technological University status in which CIT

currently involved. This process will involve a merger with Institute of Technology, Tralee. It will be important to ensure that the implementation and practice of engagement underlying this initiative will remain relevant and current in light of a comprehensive strategy and approach to engagement for the larger Munster Technological University.

SUCCESS FACTORS

The success of the initiative has depended on clear and visible support from the Executive management of the institution and simultaneously the increased emphasis on engagement or third mission activities within the higher education system in Ireland generally.

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 has been a key driver behind the CIT Extended Campus initiative. The document states that...

'over the years, higher education institutions have undertaken a wide range of engagement activities, but this has not been as coordinated as it might be, and in the future this needs to be developed more firmly as a core element of the mission of higher education in Ireland. Higher education institutions need to deepen the quality and intensity of their relationships with the communities and regions they serve, and ensure that the emergence of new ideas can better inform community and regional development. A renewal of engaged scholarship in the mission of higher education can help to unlock the transformative potential of education at community, regional and national level'.

The strategy document specifically mentions CIT and our integrated approach:

... 'participants have quickly recognised the need for institutional change, as exemplified in a recent strategy document on engagement produced by Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) which identifies 'a clear need to create a single identity for CIT as an 'engaged institute' and to support and streamline an end-to-end service model which proactively identifies regional needs and delivers a coordinated Institute response to same'

This clearly stated 'call for action' from the Department of Education and skills for informed, connected and institute-wide approaches to engagement has helped to overcome some of the difficulty in implementing a new initiative such as this.

In addition, the evolution of the Technological University model to which CIT aspires has also contributed to a sharper focus on the role of higher education within its region and the CIT Extended Campus model has benefitted from the greater emphasis on a connected and strategic approach to engagement.

Increased awareness and emphasis on the role of higher education in stimulating growth and development in organisations such as Enterprise Ireland, IBEC, IDA, Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME), Small Firms Association (SFA) has helped to drive expectations and hence inform practice in engagement generally.

Support from the Higher Education Authority for the REAP project and the CIT Extended Campus as the logical implementation of that project at an institutional level has been of great value in raising the awareness of the activities and the outputs.

TRANSFERABILITY

This model is transferable and can directly benefit any higher education institution in Ireland or indeed internationally seeking to engage with enterprise in a connected and informed way. Working with the Higher Education Authority and through the REAP Network the Extended Campus team have shared the specifics of the approach and the customer relationship management system with nine other higher education institutions in Ireland to date. Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology, Tallaght and Institute of Technology Blanchardstown as part of the Dublin Technological University Alliance (supported by the REAP project) are working together to develop a ConnectEd portal with a similar remit which will work closely with enterprise and support new and developing interactions across a broad range of activities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PUBLICATIONS / ARTICLES

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LINKS

<http://extendedcampus.cit.ie/>

<http://reap.ie/>

http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national_strategy_for_higher_education_2030.pdf

KEYWORDS

Engagement, higher education-enterprise interactions, professionalising the interface, business intelligence, customer relationship management.

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