

## WIT Committed to Achieving Upgrade with IT Carlow



WATERFORD Institute of Technology (WIT) has re-iterated its commitment to delivering a Technological University (TU) of the South East in partnership with IT Carlow (ITC). In a statement to The Munster Express issued over the weekend, a WIT spokesperson confirmed that the process is firmly in train. This followed comments made by both Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Public Expenditure Minister Brendan Howlin in recent weeks in which they indicated their dissatisfaction with the WIT/ITC application thus far. "The South East institutes are currently developing a business plan which will be submitted to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in late 2014," she said. "The plan will focus on the delivery of a multi-campus university for the South East that will drive sustainable economic development, as well as the social and cultural agenda of the region. "The plan will define the distinctive mission, vision and values of the new university and will have a particular focus on how it will meet the criteria set by the HEA to achieve TU designation." The spokesperson added: "Following submission of the business plan, the HEA will appoint an expert review panel to evaluate the submission. "Upon successful review, it is anticipated that the partner institutes will proceed with a merger and designation process, ultimately leading to the creation of a South East Technological University." When asked what level of contact was currently in place between WIT and ITC, the spokesperson replied: "The institutes meet formally each month through a joint steering group as well as many meetings of groups and colleagues on specific aspects of the plan. "The Project Implementation Board is chaired by Colin Browne (Microsoft Ireland) with the following membership: Governing Body Chairs, Presidents, Executive members from both Institutes, TU Office managers and external advisors." If successful, the Technological University will be a "multi-campus (entity), incorporating all the existing facilities and campuses of the two ITs", with logic surely dictating that its headquarters shall be based in Waterford. When asked if WIT's Governing Body had given consideration to a merger with any other third level body, such as Cork IT, this newspaper was told: "No. WIT and ITC are working together to deliver a TU for the South East." Legislation to facilitate the creation of Technological Universities is expected to be enacted early next year.