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PRESS RELEASE

“EMPLOYABILITY FOR LIFE” IS THE FOCUS FOR CIT SAYS PRESIDENT

“It has been another successful year for the staff and students of Cork Institute of Technology”, said CIT President, Dr Brendan Murphy. “During the year we continued to face the challenges brought about by the national economic situation and we also faced a degree of uncertainty in relation to the national strategy for higher education and our place within the future higher education landscape. In 2012 we also launched our strategic plan for the period up to 2016. This plan outlines the goals we will seek to achieve in the short to medium term. These goals are aligned with national priorities as laid out in the national strategy for higher education.

As we look towards the future we have an ambitious and challenging vision for the strategic development of CIT, which is that *“CIT will be an internationally recognised centre of excellence in the provision of career-focused education which produces effective, ethical professionals capable of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity.”*

A major contributor towards achieving this vision is a focus on the employability of our graduates. Long gone are the days when graduates could hope to leave college and get a permanent and pensionable position. The modern reality is that there is no longer any such thing as a *“job for life”*. That is why our focus in CIT is to provide our graduates with *“employability for life”*. Achieving lifelong employability requires the development of learners who, in the first instance, have a broad range of relevant discipline-specific knowledge, skills and competencies required to be effective professionals and practitioners in their chosen field. Furthermore, the graduate must know the requirements and responsibilities of the workplace and must have a broad range of competencies including interpersonal and communication skills, teamwork, ethics and social responsibility. Perhaps key to lifelong employability is the ability to refresh and renew knowledge and skills during the course of a career. Therefore it is essential that our graduates have the essential skills of inquiry and scholarship as well as an appreciation for the value of learning in the context of their ongoing employability. Finally, the modern graduate must be willing and able to change the focus of their career or, at times, change their entire career path to a different discipline or industry. Such change is all but inevitable in the modern economic climate. We must therefore develop graduates who have the ability to create and apply knowledge in a variety of professional contexts.

As well as focusing on the employability of our graduates, our strategic plan also focuses on our continued commitment to both serving and partnering with enterprises, public bodies and community organisations across a broad range of activities. The environment created through these interactions and relationships results in what we term an *education, research and enterprise eco-system* which provides the necessary conditions to allow all forms of enterprise and innovation to develop and succeed.

The development of this *eco-system* will play an important role in achieving our strategic vision. The eco-system is created and developed through focusing on relevant, career-

focused courses delivered in an open, flexible manner; *enabling research* which creates new knowledge and explores its practical implications and engagement embracing education, research, innovation and enterprise support.

Our approach to teaching and learning will continue to be responsive with a high degree of flexibility to meet market and stakeholder needs rapidly, and cost effectively. Furthermore we will provide flexible and innovative forms of learning facilitating access to higher education by a broad range of learners via online and distance learning, in-company delivery, recognition of prior (experiential) learning, etc.

Cork Institute of Technology has a research mission that emphasises, what we term, “*enabling research*”. This approach views research activity as a continuum that consists of: Creating new knowledge through fundamental research conducted in centres of excellence; exploring the implications of fundamental research for practical/commercial applications and exploiting fundamental research outputs to bring them to commercial stage in partnership with industry.

CIT has developed an integrated Research and Innovation environment which is focused around multidisciplinary research clusters. This focus places a strong emphasis on building critical mass in areas of strategic importance for the region, and nationally, and on ensuring that there is a productive interface between the CIT research clusters and the relevant external organisations and industries.

At the heart of our strategic vision will be the relationship with external partners and the extension of the CIT campus across the greater Cork region and into the community. There will be intensive and broad-based links with occupations, employers and community organisations. Our curriculum will continue to be developed in close consultation with business, industry and the professions. We will continue to involve personnel seconded from and/or visiting from business, industry and the professions in the delivery of our academic courses. Our successful business incubation and entrepreneur development activities will continue to grow and develop building on their success to-date which has seen over 200 start-up companies and 2,400 jobs created in the last 10 years. Effective campus extension and engagement are essential activities for CIT because it is through these interactions and partnerships that we will ensure the relevance of our activities and that we continue to meet the needs of our stakeholders.

As we face into a new year there remains a degree of uncertainty and no doubt there are unforeseen turns in the road ahead. However, we can draw comfort from our long history, which stretches back over 100 years, and from the knowledge that by focusing on our graduates and on the needs of our external stakeholders Cork Institute of Technology will continue to develop and continue to be successful into the future irrespective of what that future may bring.

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