Students welcome plans for ‘technological universities’

The Student Union at IT Tallaght has this week joined forces with their counterparts in DIT and IT Blanchardstown to voice their communal support of a Government decision to approve the development of technological universities in Ireland.

Last year, the Minister for Education and Skills Ruari Quinn TD and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) announced its proposals for the formation of three technological universities which will see Institutes grouped together operating as one university across a number of campuses – sharing resources, expertise and progression opportunities.

The three groups of institutes set to progress towards technological status were announced as IT Tallaght, Dublin Institute of Technology and IT Blanchardstown.

FUTURE: IT Tallaght will form a ‘technological university’ with Blanchardstown and Dublin ITs

Students in Ireland – look forward to engaging intensively with Government and the Institutes themselves to ensure that the new universities – in terms of the courses and student services they will be providing – are of the highest possible quality.

He added: “Another key issue for the Student’s Unions will be the governance arrangements for the new universities.

“We will be looking to ensure that the legislation setting up the new institutions provide students – through their independent students’ unions – with a central role in their Governing Bodies and Academic Councils.

“In addition, we will be seeking to ensure that there is a continued and enhanced student involvement in the new universities’ Quality Assurance procedures and the student experience.”

Eoin pens ‘Write’ stuff to tackle scourge of bullying

This week The Echo continues with its coverage of young entrepreneurs who have submitted a business project into this year’s Student Enterprise Awards – an inspiring competition which has received projects from more than 20 schools countrywide.

Supported by the South Dublin County Enterprise Board, with sponsorship from IT Tallaght, the county finals of the competition will take place in the local college on February 28 when some 80 budding entrepreneurs will showcase their viable and live businesses.

One student who will be presenting his project at the County Finals is 12-year-old Eoin Keogh from Greenhills College – who set-up a social enterprise which aims to enforce the anti-bullying message.

A first year student, Eoin was the brains behind a unique and quirky business idea which involves the creation of €1 pens branded with the slogan Write Off Bullying.

Eoin told The Echo: “My enterprise teacher wanted me to make anti-bullying wrist bands but I know a lot of young people who don’t like wearing the bands so I had to think of something else that was practical and that everybody would use – and that was easy to manufacture and sell.

“It took me about two weeks to come up with my final business plan and I’m really happy with it – and I hope it will make people more aware of bullying.”

Business teacher Maria Donoghue has been supporting Eoin with the establishment of his business and believes that his idea could help re-enforce the anti-bullying message both in schools and further afield.

She told The Echo: “Eoin has just made the transition from primary to secondary school so bullying is a very real issue for Eoin and his fellow students.

“The school already has an anti-bullying programme in place and Eoin’s pens and slogan can definitely help to re-enforce it and keep the message in people’s minds throughout the day.

“Eoin is a fantastic student and he has worked on his project after school hours – and has worked on all elements from idea generation. He started his business off organically, selling to his immediate family and friends and in the school and he is now branching out.”

She added: “The Student Enterprise Awards are great for students and we always actively encourage them in the school. They really benefit a student’s personal growth, develop their self-confidence and introduce them to a whole range of skills they may not have used before.

“It’s been a very positive, learning curve for Eoin and we’re all looking forward to the County Finals.

“A winner from each category at the County Finals will be chosen to represent South Dublin County at the National Final in April.

By Mary Dennehy
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LEARNING CURVE: Greenhills College teacher Maria Donoghue with student Eoin Keogh and his ‘Write off Bullying’ pens which sell for €1 each.

Photo by Karl Burke