



# Hotel and shops part of €400m plan to develop college campus

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A 10-year development plan is set to transform the sprawling UCD campus at Belfield at a cost of anything between €300m and €400m.

The plan includes a 300-bedroom conference hotel, a public plaza, shops, cafes, offices, a new road network, a cultural centre including a theatre and art-house cinema, a swimming pool, and a doubling of the number of student residences to 5,000.

A third of the campus will be devoted to sports facilities. An upgraded Belfield Bowl, with a seating capacity of 4,500, will be used for soccer and rugby.

The university says it is hoped that the undertaking will be carried out at no cost to the taxpayer.

Private investors will be invited to fund many of the projects, including the hotel and the shops which are expected to generate income for other buildings.

The aim of the plan is to create a sustainable living environment for the university's 30,000 students and staff, but also to open up the campus as an amenity to the local community, said UCD president Dr Hugh Brady. Yesterday he briefed Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council on an outline of the plan.

Most of the development will take place at the front of the campus where there is a lot of under-used space at present.

Dr Brady said that while the university was a success story, the campus design

and faculties were designed in a much poorer and less sophisticated economy.

The transport infrastructure was 'creaking' at the seams and the university had the busiest bus terminus in Dublin.

In addition there was no outward 'expression' of the importance of the university to the city or county in terms of urban presence or cultural uses.

The campus development plan has four key elements:

- A new science and an arts/social science centre.
- Enhanced student and community life – more residences, a swimming pool and gym.
- A knowledge, economy and innovation park.
- Engagement with the wider community through the Gateway Project.

The Gateway Project will impact most on the local community and includes proposals for the redesign of the pedestrian and road network. The current university entrance, considered dangerous and congested, would be redesigned under the plans.

The plan will incorporate improved public transport, a public plaza with significant landscaping and pedestrian space, a cultural centre, student residences in an integrated urban landscape, university welcome facilities with an emphasis on graduate services, student services, a conference hotel and retail/office facilities.

Dr Brady said that the presence of the facilities would enable UCD to leverage its wider amenities.