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# International student applications up by 40% as UCC launch strategic plan

THERE was a 40% increase in international students applying to University College Cork (UCC) this year, according to the university's president.

Global applications to UCC increased by 40% in just the past year, according to UCC President Professor Patrick O'Shea, who was speaking at the official launch of the university's five-year strategic plan.

He said Brexit and the political climate in the US could provide UCC with an opportunity to attract more international students.

"It struck me that with Brexit and what's currently happening in America, these are opportunities for us, not necessarily crises that we will be the victims of," Mr O'Shea.

"Two unexpected events that occurred in the last year, both weren't on the horizon. Besides from the immediate impact we have seen huge increases in applicants here," he added.

"I'm not claiming it's a result of Brexit but these are opportunities. The rhetoric that has been out there has been that these changes will be bad, it will change the environment.

"We have to meet these needs, the world is changing and we will be leaders of that change," he added.

"I heard yesterday that the Chinese language will now be intro-

duced to the Leaving Cert in a few years and UCC actually played a key role in promoting and developing that. The world is changing dramatically."

Cork is actually closer to Beijing than people may think, he added.

"The world is a much different place," he said, adding that his new business cards have even been printed in Chinese.

The university's five-year strategic plan hopes to achieve a 20% increase in the size of the UCC campus space by 2022.

The programme also includes a €110m investment for the Cork University Business School, €90m in expenditure for a new 'student hub' as well as a €64m investment to support student accommodation projects.

"We are no longer a university

behind walls," Mr O'Shea said.

"We've committed to growing in the city centre, it is critically important to the vitality of the city," he said, adding that the plan also involves expansion at the Curraheen site.

UCC is aiming to increase its student numbers, from 21,000 to 23,000 by 2022, as well as increasing its international student numbers, from 3,300 to 4,400.



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**An artist's impression of the proposed new student hub at UCC.**