

# Threat to Magee University resource and associated jobs 'contradicts' the university expansion plans

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Ulster University's "threatened closure" of a definitive Troubles archive at its Magee campus and the possible loss of jobs casts into doubt "assurances" given around future expansion, it has been claimed.

Member of People Before Profit, Eamonn McCann, said that CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet) is all that remains of peace and conflict activity at Magee after the Peace and Conflict Studies course was moved to Jordanstown in Belfast a number of years ago.

In recent years the Magee Campus has lost other courses including Irish History and Politics and Irish Language and Literature to other UU sites.

The CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet) website contains information and source material on 'the Troubles' and politics in Northern Ireland from 1968 to the present. CAIN is located at the Magee campus and is part of International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE) and social policy hub ARK.

In a statement to the Derry News, a spokesperson from Ulster University said the CAIN project had become financially "unsustainable."

She commented: "Consultation is underway with trade unions and impacted staff on the future of the CAIN resource. A range of options are being explored, however, the uni-



versity remains committed to ensuring ongoing access to the important material in CAIN, fully accessible to researchers through the University's library.

"A two-year period was agreed in 2016 to enable the CAIN archive to improve its financial viability and become self-funding. Despite some successful funding applications, regrettably these have not been enough and the project remains unsustainable in its current form.

"As we consult on the way forward, we will also engage with relevant partner organisations who contribute to the archive. The work of ARK and INCORE is unaffected by this consultation, which is limited to the digital archiving project."

Eamonn McCann questioned how Magee could claim to be a "civic uni-

versity" if it did not recognise that peace and conflict studies should be central to any third level institution in the city.

"CAIN is the last remnant of peace and conflict studies left in the city. Soon it may be gone entirely," he said. "Four years ago, the staff of Incore - the International Conflict Research Institute - was moved from Derry to Belfast, despite the Tip O'Neill/John Hume chair of peace and conflict studies being located here.

"It is nonsense for the university to say that the work of ARK and INCORE 'is unaffected by this consultation (on closure), which is limited to the digital archiving project.' If CAIN is allowed to close, it means that the last remnant of peace and conflict activity will have gone from Magee.

The rest has been moved lock, stock and barrel to Jordanstown.

"While the Tip O'Neill/John Hume chair might formally remain in Magee, no peace and conflict studies course - undergraduate or post graduate - remains at Magee."

Even the INCORE Summer School, which drew students from around the globe to Derry every year, has been moved to Belfast. It attracted international experts, policy-makers, researchers and peace activists to the Magee campus.

At the time professor Deirdre Heenan noted that the International Summer School highlights that the Magee Campus of the University of Ulster remains synonymous with high quality conflict transformation work globally, and is seen as a centre of excellence in Peace and Conflict Studies.

## 'Contradiction'

Mr McCann continued: "It isn't parish patriotism but a statement of fact to say that there is no city on this island more steeped in the history of Ireland - and Ireland's many and continuing conflicts.

"This is the city of the Siege, which helped shape the history not only of Ireland but of Europe.

"It is where the civil rights movement first emerged. It is where Bloody Sunday took place, changing the trajectory of the Troubles.

"History in Derry is living history." He added: "CAIN is recognised everywhere as the premier resource for study of the conflict. It is used by

researchers, historians and writers around the world.

"The threatened closure contradicts the many assurances given that the Derry campus would be protected and expanded.

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"The people of Derry must ensure that the university's management is made to think again."