



DEFINING FUTURES

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4 /// April 2022

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Defining Futures Newsletter which provides an overview of college activities from when we returned to college after February half-term, until the end of the Easter term.

During this half-term there has been more newsworthy activities going on – our Football Academy students benefitted from a coaching session from former Wolverhampton Wanderers captain Karl Henry, and a talk from current midfielder Luke Cundle, our hairdressing students supported a customer’s fundraising head shave, and our health and social care students took part in the first Social Care Day of Remembrance and Reflection by writing messages to staff who had worked throughout the pandemic on a giant remembrance wall.

We affirmed our commitment to creating a culture of safety for our students by joining colleges from across the region to sign a Safer Students Charter, and were delighted to share the success of an unemployed factory worker who attended one of our sector-based work academy programmes and so impressed the tutors on the course that he’s now been employed by the college to train others on the same course!

Read more about what’s been going on from page 2 onwards



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Construction of new training facilities at Wellington Road gets underway

Work on the extension to the Construction Innovation Centre at the Wellington Road campus started over the Easter Holidays.

The £1.93 million project will see the construction of two purpose-built mezzanine areas delivering increased workshop capacity for electrical and plumbing, as well as refurbished spaces for gas and painting and decorating training. The development will also provide two new additional classroom spaces, equipped with cutting-edge hybrid learning technology to give access to high-quality interactive teaching to students who are unable to attend the sessions in person.

The areas will all be equipped with industry-standard tools and equipment so that students will gain experience of using the same kit as they would in the workplace. They will also benefit from the build offering work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, giving them the chance to work on a large-scale construction project and be involved in building their own learning facilities in partnership with the Contractor.

The new facilities, developed with funding from the Department of Education’s Post-16 Capacity Fund, are due to open for the start of the 2022/23 academic year in September and the project is being led by Wolverhampton-based construction company Interclass PLC.

You can keep up to date with the build on our social media platforms.



Celebration Events

Students and apprentices have now returned to college for the final term of the academic year and we’re looking forward to recognising their commitment to learning and individual achievements at our end of year celebrations at Grand Station, in Wolverhampton in July – we’re hosting our apprenticeship awards on the evening of Wednesday 13 July, followed by our student celebration ceremonies and higher education graduation on Thursday 14 July. If you know of a student who has received an invitation to the celebration events, but hasn’t yet booked their place, please encourage them to do so.



Student Stories

We’re always keen to get feedback from students about how their courses are going, what they’re learning and their plans for the future and have spoken to a few more this term - **read what they had to say from page 6 onwards**



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Open Evening – Wednesday, 4 May

Of course, moving towards the end of an academic year brings us closer to the start of the next one and we're already recruiting students to start with us in September. Almost 200 potential students attended our open evening in March and we're looking forward to welcoming more at our next open evening on **Wednesday, 4 May, 4pm-7pm**

Visitors can find out about the range of courses we offer, have a tour of campus facilities, talk to tutors about the best qualifications for their chosen career and get advice on apprenticeships from our recruitment team. If you know anyone who would benefit from attending, they can **book a place at the event here**.



Student survey results are in!

In February/March, **1,666 full-time students**, and those on **substantial study programmes**, completed an in-house survey to give their views on a range of college areas, including the quality of teaching and learning, tutors' knowledge, staying safe, attendance and the learning environment. Responses have seen results broadly maintaining a satisfaction rate of 95% or above in comparison to last year, with improvement for some key questions.



Students' comments included:

"I am constantly supported and receive help if required by my tutors who show me my potential and help me reach my goals."

"What I like most about studying at the College is the fact I am able to gain feedback, not only from my peers but also my tutors. I love how my tutors push me to be the best version of myself and will also always support me in the process. I think studying at Wolvcoll has helped me become determined and more passionate about my chosen course."

In addition, **130 students on higher education programmes** completed the survey, again with the majority of responses broadly maintaining a position in comparison to last year's results.

Comments included:

"I like most the flexibility to study in the evening which suits work and family life."

"The course has been strongly led and very supportive and I feel I get the help I need when I ask for it."

Following both surveys, curriculum managers are now in the process of reviewing responses in more detail and focus groups will be held to ensure that we continue to provide a positive learning experience for all students.



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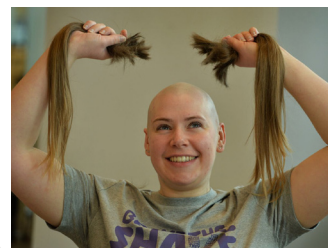
IN THE NEWS...

Hairdressing students sharpen scissors for charity hair chop

Hairdressing students supported the fundraising efforts of a customer when they shaved her head at our New Era training academy in the city centre.

Fay Yates, aged 32, from Penkridge, braved the shave to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support and donated her cut locks to the Little Princess Trust, a charity that provides real-hair wigs to children and young people who have lost their own hair through cancer.

Read more about the charity hair chop here

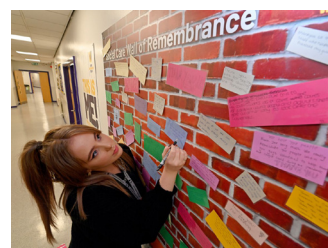


Students pay tribute to care staff on giant remembrance wall

Students studying for health and social care qualifications paid tribute to the work and dedication of social care staff during the pandemic by writing messages of thanks on a giant remembrance wall at the Wellington Road campus during the first Social Care Day of Remembrance and Reflection on March 17.

Students working towards diplomas in health and social care and counselling, as well as those doing health-focused access to higher education and foundation degree courses, led the tributes, with students from other courses, as well as college staff, also invited to leave messages on the wall.

Read more about what remembrance wall here



Students get lowdown on football career from Wolves player

Students from the college's football academy programme heard first-hand about a career in football, when Wolverhampton Wanderers midfielder Luke Cundle dropped into college for a chat.

He spoke to around 50 students from the academy – which is run by the college in partnership with the Wolverhampton Wanderers Foundation – and also presented two tickets to the Wolves match against Aston Villa to student of the month Mustafa Hussain.

Read more about Luke Cundle's visit here



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Former Wolves captain Karl Henry pitches up for training session

Hot on the heels of Luke Cundle’s visit, football academy players were then put through their paces when former Wolverhampton Wanderers captain Karl Henry pitched up to run a training session at the Wellington Road campus.

Around 75 members of the academy took part in the session with Henry praising the players for listening and learning from his advice and observing that some of them would have bright futures in the game.



Read more about Karl Henry’s training session here

College job success for unemployed student

Signing up for a free sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) has led to job success for a former unemployed factory worker, as he’s now employed by the college and is training others doing the same course!

Nathon Kerr signed up for a groundworks SWAP in February 2020 to re-train and gain the skills and knowledge to carry out groundworks and use plant machinery on construction sites and his commitment to learning and willingness to help fellow students so impressed tutors that when a vacancy for a groundworks trainer became available he was encouraged to apply for the post and was offered the job.



Read more about Nathon’s job success here

College signs Safer Students Charter

The college has joined forces with colleges from across the region to sign a Safer Students Charter, affirming its commitment to creating a culture of safety for all students.

The charter, developed by the Colleges West Midlands network, contains five safety elements to support students and help them to learn and develop, as well as a number of measures that colleges can use to measure progress, promote shared resources and work together to support students’ safety and wellbeing.



Read more about the Safer Students Charter here



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Curriculum updates

Students studying for **automotive qualifications** benefitted from a visit from James Mackay, director of the Autotech Academy, a recruitment agency for the automotive industry, who talked about how the company can support them into getting jobs in the industry when they have completed their qualifications. The company also organised a Talent Recharge careers event at the F1 Red Bull Headquarters in Milton Keynes which was attended by Stephanie Jones, automotive curriculum manager, and Shelley Kenny, automotive account manager and provided an opportunity to find out how the industry is changing and to network with employers in the sector.

Health and social care students who took part in the Social Care Day of Remembrance and Reflection raised £100 for the Care Workers' charity by holding a raffle as part of their activities on the day.

Students working towards the **Access to Higher Education diploma (Business pathway)**, found out about the role that Liverpool played in the transport and trade of goods during the British Empire on a visit to the city. The group visited a range of landmarks, including the site of the city's own stock exchange and had the opportunity to explore history, economics and the true cost of the empire and evaluate its success through modern eyes.

In the **hairdressing and beauty** department, a **hairdressing student** took part in the national finals of the Concept Hair Learner of the Year Awards 2022, held at Solihull College, in March. Students took part in a range of enrichment activities - including body wraps and wedding hair, as well as attending sessions with trainers from Bluesky nail gel and One Stroke nail art - and the team are building up client lists in both the **New Era hair salons** at Paget Road and Bilston Street and **New Era beauty salon**, with offers for a range of treatments regularly advertised across our social media channels.

Student Stories

Read about how some of our A Level and creative arts students have been progressing on their courses – we've followed these students since the start of the academic year, so you'll be able to read more from them in next month's edition too!

Adam Cater – Games Design

After working as a healthcare assistant after leaving school, 21-year-old Adam Cater decided to put his interest in computer games to good use and signed up for the Level 2 diploma in games design in September 2020 and has now progressed to the Level 3 qualification.

Adam said: *"I love playing computer games and wanted to learn how they're made which will lead me to my dream job as a games programmer in the future."*

"After applying for the course I had an admissions interview and was given the option to go straight on to the Level 3 course but I opted for Level 2 so that I could start at the beginning and build up my knowledge as I go along."

Read more from Adam here



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Rhiannon Cooper - Photography

Coming along to a college open day, passing the photography studio and stopping for a chat with a tutor led 17-year-old Rhiannon Cooper to change her mind about the games design course she'd come to find out about and she signed up for the Level 3 extended diploma in photography instead!

Rhiannon, who is now in the second year of the course, said: *"I knew I wanted to do something creative and learn hands-on where I'd be assessed through course work, rather than have to do exams."*

When I went into the photography studio and saw all the equipment and the dark room and spoke to the tutors about the course modules it sounded really interesting and I was impressed with the amount of knowledge I'd gain."

[Read more from Rhiannon here](#)



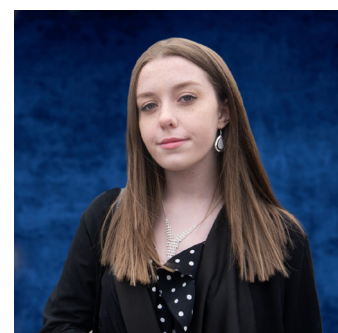
Kacey Howell - Performing Arts

Enrolling for the Level 3 diploma in performing arts is enabling 17-year-old Kacey Howell to combine her interest with gaining the skills she will need for a future career in the industry.

Kacey said: *"Whilst I was at school I was unsure of my education route after my GCSEs and, having worked hard in academic subjects, I wanted more practical training to prepare me for my future career."*

I chose to come to college as the course provides specialised training with more practical elements, and it also has better facilities for rehearsing, performing and learning the technical side of the industry."

[Read more from Kacey here](#)



Paulina Patzova - A Levels

30-year-old Paulina Patzova is proof that it's never too late to change career and follow your dreams after coming to college to study A-levels as a mature student.

Paulina, who is doing A-levels in chemistry, maths and physics and wants to do a degree in astrophysics at university, said: *"I have always been fascinated by the night sky, but as a teenager I didn't have the opportunity to follow my passion so I studied business and worked in various professions over the years."*

But my interest in space and science never faded – in fact, it grew – and I realised it's never too late to change career and pursue my dream, but that I would need to improve my skills and knowledge before going to university."

[Read more from Paulina here](#)



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