



DEFINING FUTURES

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 15 /// FEBRUARY 2024

Welcome to the third edition of the Defining Futures newsletter for the 2023/24 academic year which covers activities that took place from when students returned to college in January until breaking-up for half-term in February.

What's in this issue?

This issue contains an update about the College's ambitious campus transformation project with exciting news about the construction of the new city centre campus and an update on progress of the Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre at the Wellington Road campus.

There is also a report on the January open day, pictures from a dance showcase by talented performing arts students, details of this year's apprenticeship awards and how a grant from Wolverhampton City Council is helping apprentices with cost of living expenses.

Plus, with students now well into their second term, there's a round-up of the activities they've taken part in to enhance their learning.

CONSTRUCTION STARTS ON CITY CENTRE CAMPUS

The middle of January saw a major milestone in the construction of the college's new city centre campus, with full construction work getting underway on site.

Described by Wolverhampton Council as the 'jewel in the crown' of the £61 million City Learning Quarter development, the four-storey campus is scheduled to be completed for the start of the 2025/26 academic year and will provide an inspirational environment in which to learn and work.

Mal Cowgill, Principal of the College, said: "The latest milestone in the construction of the City Learning Quarter is great news for the city, great news for the College and great news for the thousands of students and apprentices who will benefit from its first-class training facilities in the years to come.

The city centre campus, along with the Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre at the Wellington



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Road campus in Bilston, will play a major part in driving up skills levels across the region and further position the College as a leading education provider in the West Midlands.”

Keep up-to-date of the new campus **here**.

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ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMOTIVE CENTRE

Following the completion of the erection of the steel framework of the centre, the roofing panels are now in place, the ground floor and first floor concrete slabs poured and work on the installation of brick plinths and exterior cladding is underway.

The centre is set to open for the start of the 2024/25 academic year in September and will enable the relocation of automotive and engineering courses from the Paget Road campus.

Keep track of the development of the centre **here**.



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OPEN DAY - SATURDAY, 13 JANUARY

As the new term got underway over 400 potential new students attended open day on Saturday, 13 January.

It was great to see so many young people talking to tutors about courses on offer and the exciting careers that our industry-recognised qualifications can lead to, with many of those attending getting ahead of the game and applying for their chosen course while at the event.

The next open day is on Wednesday, 24 April, 4pm – 7pm and places can be booked **here**.



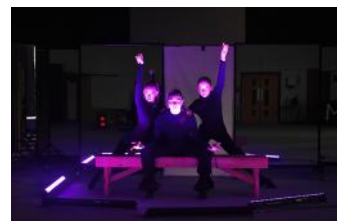
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STUDENTS TAKE TO STAGE FOR DANCE PERFORMANCE

Talented performing arts students showcased their dance skills in a performance exploring the creative process of the body and mind when inspired by artists and artwork.

Around 30 students - who are studying for University of the Arts London diplomas and extended diplomas in performing arts - were given just three weeks to research, plan, develop and choreograph the production which featured contemporary dance, movement and physical theatre.

The showcase - entitled Kyma - took place at the Paget Road campus on 7 and 8 February.



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EMPLOYERS INVITED TO NOMINATE APPRENTICES FOR COLLEGE AWARDS

Employers training their apprentices through the College have been given the opportunity to nominate them for a series of awards.

The College has launched its Apprenticeship Awards for 2024, featuring awards for Apprentice of the Year in 11 industry categories including automotive, business, engineering and management.

Employers are required to detail what makes their apprentice stand out in the workplace, highlight their progress, achievements and outstanding qualities, and provide evidence of how the experience, skills and knowledge they have gained during their programme has benefited the business.

The awards also feature an Employer of the Year category, which will be given to the company that best demonstrates how its apprenticeship programme meets its current and future skills requirements, delivers exceptional training and attracts new apprentices to the business.

Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in the Hayward Suite at Molineux Stadium on Thursday 11 July, to which all nominated apprentices and their employers will be invited.

Find out more about the awards and nominate an apprentice or employer **here**.



APPRENTICES GET FINANCIAL BOOST TO HELP WITH LIVING EXPENSES

National Apprenticeship Week (5-11 February) saw apprentices studying at the College receiving a financial boost to help with cost of living expenses, thanks to a grant from City of Wolverhampton Council.

The College received £75,000 from the Council’s Household Support Fund, with 254 apprentices who have Wolverhampton postcodes each set to receive a one-off payment of around £300 which can be used to help with costs associated with work, such as travel, clothing and food.

Mal Cowgill, Principal of the College, said: “An apprenticeship is a great way to get on the career ladder and gain the skills and knowledge employers need by learning on-the-job in the workplace.

“We know, however, that the costs associated with working - such as travelling to and from the workplace, purchasing work-appropriate clothing, or buying food to eat during the working day - is a concern to some apprentices and, therefore, we are extremely grateful to the Council for supporting them by providing this funding.”

Kieran Ford (pictured), aged 18, from Coseley, who is a business apprentice in the college’s procurement team, said: “I was really pleased when I was told about the grant from the Household Support Fund to help with expenses associated with my apprenticeship.

As I work in a business environment it’s important that I dress smartly and the funding will enable me to purchase some additional work clothes which I will also be able to wear when attending interviews and work-related events in the future.”



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SUPPORTING LOCAL PEOPLE INTO WORK

Students on a four-week West Midlands Metro sector-based work academy programme completed their journey to becoming tram drivers or customer service representatives by taking part in a range of activities to prepare them for interviews with the company, including the use of Bodyswaps technology to give them a realistic experience in a virtual world!



Local people interested in working for popular high street store Home Bargains attended a recruitment day at the Paget Road campus where they found out about employment opportunities with the company and were interviewed for vacancies at the company's new store in Wednesfield.



Participants in a digital skills bootcamp - run by the College in partnership with BlackRook Academy and funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority - celebrated the end of the course at a celebratory event where they showcased their new skills, networked with employers and heard from author and former Bootcamp participant Philip Armstrong who has sold over 500,000 books since completing the course last year.



SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS

Employers from across the region found out about how new developments at the College will benefit their business and employees at a networking breakfast.

Around 50 representatives attended the event at the Wellington Road campus to get an update on the campus transformation project from Principal Mal Cowgill, and heard from Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands and chair of the West Midlands Combined Authority, and Councillor Stephen Simkins, leader of City of Wolverhampton Council, about how the new developments will drive up skills levels across the city and wider region.



The event also saw the launch of a series of sector advisory boards - with employers from different sectors invited to help tutors develop learning programmes to address specific skills gaps and ensure the workforce of the future is equipped with the skills and knowledge their industries require.

Staff from the College's specialist Polymer Training & Innovation Centre in Telford hosted an event for businesses and apprentices interested in finding out more about the range of training courses and business support on offer and seeing demonstrations of injection moulding and blow moulding machines.



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SUPPORTING COLLEGE STAFF

Staff across the College have been enhancing their digital skills at ‘Train the Trainer’ sessions, discovering how to make the best use of virtual reality and the Bodyswaps platform to boost learning and deliver more digitally-focused sessions in the classroom.

Innovative ways of teaching and engaging students were the focus of a series of continued professional development sessions for staff from curriculum areas with hands-on activities, workshops and discussion groups enabling staff to share their knowledge and insight into delivering of learning.

The Quality Team visited Hull College to exchange ideas, share practices, introduce new methods of learning and explore innovative approaches to education.

During a continuing professional development day, learning and development coach, Bob Craig, led a workshop on Modelling Metacognition giving teaching staff the opportunity to explore new strategies and ways of thinking that can be used in the classroom.

As part of a partnership with other Colleges in the West Midlands, some of our staff shared stories of how those from different ethnic backgrounds find working in further education, what drew them to the field, their career paths and the support they’ve received along the way.

Watch the video [here](#).

New recruits to the College attended a welcome event to meet the Executive Management Team, find out about the roles of members of the Senior Management Team in a speed meeting session, take part in group activities with other new members of staff, and participate in a Q&A session to find out more about the College and planned developments for the future.



CURRICULUM ROUND UP

APPRENTICESHIPS

Staff from the Employer Engagement and Business Development Team met with representatives from Budweiser Brewing Group UK&I to discuss the College’s drinks dispense apprenticeship, the benefits it brings to the company, training plans for the future and how they can make the best use of the apprenticeship levy.



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Automotive painting apprentices visited the Bridge Academy in Wednesbury to find out more about where they will be completing their end-point assessments at the end of their training programme.



During National Apprenticeship Week, the team hosted a drop-in session at the Wellington Road campus, as well as a virtual live chat, for anyone interested in an apprenticeship to find out more - from which programmes are available and the career paths they can lead to, to the content of the training and combining working for an employer with studying at College.

AUTOMOTIVE

Students from the automotive department paid a visit to Keltruck Scania’s depot in West Bromwich to find out about the company’s history and careers available within the organisation, as well as taking part in a quiz and a paper aeroplane competition.



Along with fellow students from the engineering department, students also visited Morris Lubricants in Shrewsbury to learn about the fundamental functions of lubricants, the basic principles of formatting oils and lubricants, and have a tour of the production facilities and quality control laboratory.



In preparation for work experience after half-term, students also visited Central Accident in Wednesbury, to see the body and paint workshops they will be working in during their placements.



BAKERY

As soon as the festive season was over, bakery students turned their attention to Valentine’s Day, making and decorating an assortment of heart-shaped biscuits.



What’s more, they also started to get ready for Easter, practicing making tasty hot cross buns which will be on sale in the on-site bakery shop at the Wellington Road campus after the half-term break.

BUSINESS

Business students organised a cultural awareness day for fellow students to showcase different cultures.

The day featured food from five different countries, displays about



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traditional attire and important cultural events, as well as interactive games and a raffle to raise money for Welcome St Georges, a charity helping children living in poverty in Cairo’s garbage village of Mottamodia.

During January’s open day, students also promoted the work of the British Heart Foundation by offering blood pressure checks to visitors and organising a raffle to raise money for the charity.



In preparation for working life, students completed 30 hours of work experience, focusing on digital innovation. Working in groups they were tasked with producing a business plan to benefit a company or improve a service.



COMPUTING AND IT

Computing and IT student Doina Surchicin demonstrated her creative skills when she entered a winter contest, hosted by the College’s Study Hubs, to design a card or produce a piece of written work capturing what the festive season means to her.



The panel of judges praised Doina’s entry for encapsulating the joy and festivity of the season while showcasing exceptional artistic talent and creativity - and not only did Doina win a hamper of festive goodies, her design featured on the College’s 2023 Christmas card too!



CREATIVE ARTS

Students doing photography courses took part in a creative portrait competition as part of their lighting assessment.



The competition was judged by over 85 people, many of whom work in the photography industry, with Level 3 students Sara James (left) and Katy Richards (right) being named as winners of their individual groups, and Katy’s image selected as overall winner.



ENGINEERING

While students wait to move to the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre in September, the entrance to the current engineering corridor at the Paget Road campus has been given a spruce up with images of students in the workshop.



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Meanwhile, students have been hard at work preparing for their exams by doing mock assessments for the MIG welding practical unit of their course and carrying out magnetic particle testing and dye penetrant testing in line with ISO and British standards.



MATHS

Students attending maths classes received end-of-term awards for their excellent attendance, top mock exam results, and fantastic attitude towards learning.



Students needing some extra support with maths have been attending a new 3-4 club - which run from 3pm-4pm on Wednesdays during term time - to get one-to-one help from maths tutors.



FUTURES FOUNDATION LEARNING

To round off last term, students from the Futures foundation programme celebrated their achievements at a morning of sport and fun challenges hosted by tutors from maths and English in the sports hall.



Before they broke up for half-term students had a Valentine's Day stall, selling cards and running a tombola and raffle, with 10% of profits being donated to the charity Guts UK.



SPORT & FITNESS

Before the festive break, students doing sport and personal training qualifications used the knowledge they'd gained from the skills acquisition unit of the course in an escape room challenge at Clue HQ - managing to escape in the nick of time!



In partnership with the England Kabaddi Association, the sports centre hosted the National Mahraz Darshan Das Championship which showcased a spectacular demonstration of talent and sportsmanship in the contact team sport which is played between two teams of seven players.



STUDENT STORIES

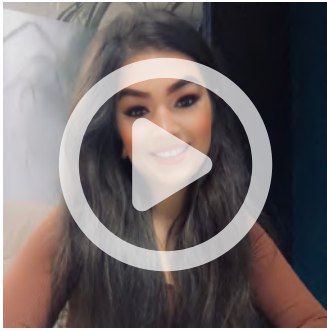
Take a look at what some of our former students have to say about their courses and the opportunities they have led to - click on their picture to find out more.



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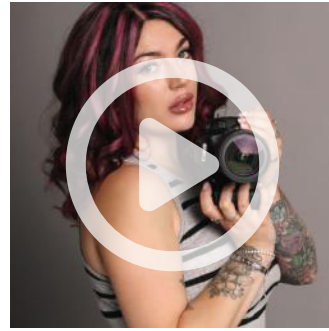
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*Miya Davies Patel -
Art and Design Level 2
and Level 3 Diplomas*



*Andrew Harrison -
Certificate in Education*



*Hannah Lunn - Art and
Design Level 3 Diploma*



*Lisha Symmonds -
Certificate in Education*

For more student stories visit: www.wolvcoll.ac.uk/our-college/student_stories



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