



DEFINING FUTURES

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

/// APRIL 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the Defining Futures newsletter which covers the period from when students returned after the February half-term break until they broke up for the Easter holidays.



What's in this issue?

This issue contains exciting news about the college being ranked in the top three colleges in England for student achievement rates, and the unveiling of images of the interior of the new City Learning Quarter.

There's also details of a sponsorship arrangement supporting local charity, Compton Care, news about luxury car manufacturer, Bentley, choosing the college to deliver apprenticeship training, and an appeal for memories of the Paget Road campus before the site closes in the autumn.

What's more, as in every edition, there's a round-up of activities that students have taken part in during the term and case studies of current students from a range of curriculum areas.

Enjoy the issue!



COLLEGE IN TOP THREE IN ENGLAND FOR ACHIEVEMENT RATES

In the latest Department of Education's annual national achievement rates tables (NARTs), the college was ranked in the top three colleges in England – and best in the West Midlands – for overall student achievement rates.


The figures, published in March, show that the college's results for the 2023/24 academic year increased to 92.7% (from 89% in 2022/23), the third highest outcome for overall achievement across all general further education providers in England.



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This also positions the college as first in the West Midlands, ahead of neighbouring colleges in Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Telford and Walsall.

A breakdown of the results shows that the colleges is sixth in the country for achievement rates for full-time students aged under 19 and fifth for adult learners studying part-time courses.

Louise Fall, Principal and Chief Executive of the college, said: "We knew that our overall performance in the last academic year was exceptional, but to be ranked in the top three in England and the best in the West Midlands is fantastic news!"

Read more **here**.

INTERIOR IMAGES OF NEW CITY LEARNING QUARTER UNVEILED

Construction of the new £61 million state-of-the-art campus - which is phase two of City of Wolverhampton Council's CLQ masterplan - is progressing on schedule.

Partitions, mechanical and electrical work, roofing, cladding, plant room fit-outs and the installation of lifts and windows are well underway. Scaffolding will be removed in early summer and the campus will open to students in the autumn.



Local people got an insight into what the interior of building will be like when new computer-generated images of the main foyer, beauty salon, performing arts space, science lab and training kitchen were unveiled.

Get the latest on the new campus **here**.

COLLEGE AND CONTRACTOR TEAM UP TO SUPPORT COMPTON CARE

The construction company building the new CLQ campus has teamed up with the college to support local charity, Compton Care.

McLaughlin & Harvey - the main contractor appointed by City of Wolverhampton Council - is sponsoring the college's football teams' kits which will feature the charity's well-recognised grey and yellow logo.

College staff were asked to vote for which charity should appear on players' football shirts, with Compton Care, which provides specialist palliative and bereavement support for local people living with a life-limiting condition, named as the overall winner.



Read more **here**.



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LUXURY CAR MANUFACTURER BENTLEY APPRENTICES ELECTRIFYING THEIR CAREERS AT COLLEGE

Luxury car manufacturer, Bentley Motors, is preparing its staff for the journey towards producing electric vehicles by enrolling 18 of its Manufacturing Technicians on electrical apprenticeships at the college.

The three-year maintenance operations and engineering apprenticeship will see participants from Bentley's site in Crewe attend block-release placement every six weeks at the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre, at the Wellington Road campus in Bilston.



In addition, the college is also providing polymer apprenticeship training for a further four staff which will be delivered at its specialist Polymer Training and Innovation Centre in Telford.

Read more [here](#).

APPEAL FOR MEMORIES AT PAGET ROAD CAMPUS BEFORE SITE CLOSES

Former students and staff at the college's Paget Road campus are being asked to share their memories of the site before it shuts when all courses move to the new CLQ campus in the autumn.

Staff are keen to gather stories and photographs to form part of a historical archive which will be on display at the new campus and also feature at a celebration event to mark the end of an era and recognise the contribution the site has made to education in the city for over six decades.



Read more [here](#).

Got memories to share? Email dwighta@wolvcoll.ac.uk

IN MEMORY

Staff were saddened to hear of the death of John Hogg, who served as Interim Principal at the college from 2012 to 2013.

A highly respected leader in further education, he dedicated over 40 years to the sector guiding and support colleges through times of change.

During his time in Wolverhampton, John made a meaningful impact on the college community and those who worked with him will remember his wisdom, warmth, and sense of humour.



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PROMOTING PROGRESSION

Students found out about progression opportunities after finishing college at a higher education careers fair during College's Week.

They were able to speak to employers and representatives from local universities about career paths and employment opportunities in a range of industries and higher education programmes in different subjects.



PROMOTING SAFETY AND SECURITY

A young singer used music to engage students and encourage them to think about their mental health during a mini concert at the Wellington Road campus.

Joel Foster, from Burton-Upon-Trent, performed a mixture of songs and shared his personal experience of mental health and bullying to encourage students to make healthy life and relationship choices and give them confidence to seek help and support when required.



Watch a clip of the performance [here](#).

As part of enrichment week, inspirational speaker Larissa Astara Gray talked to students about healthy relationships and shared insights into building positive relationships, staying safe and making informed and confident choices.



The security of students, apprentices, staff and visitors is of paramount importance and during College's Week a member of the security team recorded a video to highlight the measures in operation to keep everyone safe on campus.

Watch the video [here](#).

PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The college runs a number of Skills Bootcamps and Into Employment programmes to equip local people with the skills needed to work in a range of different sectors.

The latest cohorts of students have recently completed a social media content creator Level 4 skills bootcamp - delivered by Blackbrook Academy - and rail training - delivered in partnership with NIS Group and West Midlands Combined Authority - with a number already progressing to work for companies across the region.



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SUPPORTING STAFF

The Quality and Business Learning and Technologies Teams hosted the second cross-college continuing professional development day of the academic year which focused on strategies to drive student success.

Sessions were delivered by a range of external partners and covered artificial intelligence, Microsoft 365 tools, Ed Tech tools, T Levels, SEN inclusion, assessment for learning, behaviour management and stretch & challenge to help staff push the boundaries of innovation in education.



SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS

Employers from across the region found out about how the new city centre campus will create opportunities for skills, growth and education at a business networking breakfast.

The Your Business, Our Campus event featured presentations from Councillor Chris Burden, City of Wolverhampton Council's cabinet member for City Development, Jobs and Skills, who spoke about how the new campus will benefit the city and the wider region.



Attendees also heard from Jenny Cannon from the University of Wolverhampton, who shared insights into skills shortages in the region and the role education plays in closing the gap.

Local employers benefitted from a free masterclass delivered by cybersecurity expert Mushahid Alam who shared his expertise on spotting common security vulnerabilities, protecting application access and seamlessly integrating identity security measures into existing IT infrastructure.



The workshop was delivered through a partnership with Innovate UK and Skills West Midlands + Warwickshire which delivers free workshops and training for SME's.

The college recognised local employer Midwest Mechanical and Electrical Services' investment in education and training by nominating it for a new Skills Partnership Award.

The inaugural awards marked the first year of Skills West Midlands + Warwickshire - a body formed by further education colleges and independent training providers as a one-stop shop for businesses - and the ceremony was attended by Jacqui Smith, Minister of State for Skills and Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands.



Read more **here**.

The event also provided an opportunity for students Doina Surchicin and Mihaly Hlatky to join a panel discussion with the Minister to share insights on what influences young people's career choices.



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A longstanding relationship between plastics fabrication company KraussMaffei and the college's specialist Polymer Training and Innovation Centre (PTIC) is continuing to address the industry-wide skills gap in the industry by equipping the next generation of engineers and technicians with the expertise the sector requires.



PTIC, in Telford, recently took delivery of a new state-of-the-art 81-250 PX all-electric injection moulding machine which will enable industry professionals and apprentices to benefit from hands-on experience with cutting-edge technology and gain practical skills relevant to the current manufacturing environment.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

As a partner of Bilston Town Community Football Club, representatives from the college attended the club's Big Bilston Town Day community event.

The day - which was attended by Pat McFadden, MP for Wolverhampton South East - featured a range of activities for local families and gave six students the opportunity to gain work experience by assisting stewards during a match against Saffron Dynamo FC.



COLLEGE LIFE

Students from the Sport, Travel and Tourism, and Uniformed Public Services departments headed off to France for a week of activities and sightseeing.

They travelled from Dover to Calais by ferry, visited a local market, visited the Château de Fontainebleau, climbed the Eiffel Tower, took a boat trip on the River Seine and had fun at Disneyland Paris.



CURRICULUM ROUND-UP

A LEVELS

Students studying for a range of A levels got an insight into life as a politician when Sureena Brackenridge, MP for Wolverhampton North East, paid a visit to the Paget Road campus during College's Week.

She spoke about her upbringing in Wednesfield and her journey to representing the community in Parliament and answered questions from students on current political issues, the responsibilities of an MP and how young people can get involved in their communities.



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ART AND DESIGN

Students enrolled on Art, Design and Photography courses are preparing to showcase their latest work in an exhibition at the Paget Road campus.

Around 30 students are exhibiting work – including 2D drawings, painting and photographs, 3D models and sculptures, and 4D videos – on the theme of charity with entries featuring work for Cancer Research UK, Cats Protection, Keep Britain Tidy and Safe Gigs for Women.

The exhibition will be open on weekdays from Monday 28 April until Friday, 23 May, 10am – 3pm, and entry is free.



Picture credit: Issac Edwards



An Art and Design student's 'purrfect' drawings have been selected to appear in a children's book about the adventures of two cats, produced by Moseley Writers' Group.

The group organised the competition to provide artwork for the story with student Shaffi Rahman's work selected as perfect illustration of the humorous tale, earning him a £50 gift voucher with a further £50 voucher to be presented on completion of the artwork in the summer.



AUTOMOTIVE

Students studying for Level 3 Automotive qualification have kick-started their career in the industry by gaining valuable work experience with Stellantis, one of the biggest car manufacturers in the world.

Through the company's Rising Stars programme, the students spent two weeks training at its UK headquarters in Coventry and were paid for part-time work at a local dealership, with the chance to move into full-time jobs with a dealership on completion of the qualifications.



Two teams of students doing Level 1 diplomas took part in an Automotive Technician Trophy challenge, sponsored by automotive supplier Valeo UK at the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre.

They competed against students from Heart of Worcester College and South and City College Birmingham in a range of practical tasks, securing first and third place with the first team set to benefit from a day's training at Valeo's UK's headquarters in Redditch.



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APPRENTICESHIPS

Hairdressing apprentice, Ellie Swift, who works at Devils Haircut in Penkridge, achieved a distinction in her Level 2 Hairdressing end-point assessment.

Staff from the Apprenticeship Team showcased what the college has to offer at the National Apprenticeship Show at the Coventry Building Society Arena.



BAKERY, HOSPITALITY AND CATERING

Bakery students have been hard at work turning out Irish-themed cookies for St Patrick's Day in March, soft bread rolls for Wolves Foundation's Hospitality Team to serve on match days, and a range of Easter goodies before breaking up for the holidays.



BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL

Students enrolled on Level 3 courses took part in a session on financial fitness run by Mel Bradburn from West Brom Building Society.

They gained key money management skills for the future by exploring salaries, deductions, pensions, budgeting, borrowing and fraud awareness, as well as taking part in a fun quiz at the end of the session.



Students also attended masterclasses at University of Wolverhampton Business School, gaining valuable insights into the world of business and a taste of higher education, as well as having a tour of the campus facilities and finding out about learning opportunities available after leaving college.



COMPUTING AND DIGITAL

Students enrolled on computing and digital courses got an insight into a career in cyber security from Miximillian Ward, a cyber security analyst at aerospace company Airbus.

He discussed his role and how it helps protect the company from cyberattacks and gave students an insight into career opportunities available in the industry.



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During enrichment week, students also benefitted from a talk on road safety by Joshua B from the S.A.M.E Academy.



ENGINEERING

Representatives from XYZ Machinery Ltd visited the Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre to review how the full suite of new engineering equipment has been performing since it was commissioned from the company when the new centre opened.

Watch an interview with Jim Wilkins, Curriculum Manager for Engineering, about the benefits that the equipment will have for students and apprentices [here](#).



Tutor David Morris got hands-on with the newly installed laser cutter just in time for Mother's Day!

FUTURES FOUNDATION LEARNING

Students on the Futures foundation learning programme have been getting a taste of working in the hospitality industry on a 10-week work experience placement at the Mount Hotel Country Manor, in Tettenhall.



HAIR AND BEAUTY

Hairdressing student Nina Leigh made it through to the finals of the Concept Hair Learner of the Year 2025 awards.

From 2,800 entries, she was one of just 56 stylists selected to compete in the final in front of a panel of leading industry experts.



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Students enrolled on the new health T Level qualification attended an interactive grade booster workshop to prepare them for forthcoming exams.

The event, held at the Vue cinema at StarCity in Birmingham, was hosted by awarding body NCFE and support service Tutor2U.



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PERFORMING ARTS

Former Performing Arts student Nicole Lewis (pictured in the centre of the middle row) has been cast as character Slick in Andrew Lloyd Webber's Starlight Express, opening in the West End in June.

Nicole studied Performing Arts at the college from 2012-2015 and, fresh from starring in the touring production of the smash-hit musical SIX, returned last year to inspire students in a dance workshop inspired by the show.



SPORT AND FITNESS

Wolverhampton Wanderers' centre-back Yerson Mosquera paid a visit to the Wellington Road campus to speak to students on the Football Academy programme about his career and the mental and physical challenges of recovering from an injury, as well as giving tips on training and nutrition.



Sports students headed to Boston in the USA thanks to support from the Turing Scheme which provides funding to support study and work placements around the world.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Parts of an aeroplane have landed at the Wellington Road campus and Travel and Tourism students will soon be benefitting from interactive learning in a real aircraft cabin.



Students visited Birmingham Airport and took part in a day of practical learning which included creating a vlog showing a passenger's journey through the airport from checking in to boarding!


UNIFORMED PUBLIC SERVICES

Students visited Newman University in Birmingham and took part in taster sessions on law and professional policing to gain an insight into higher education qualifications and studying at degree level.



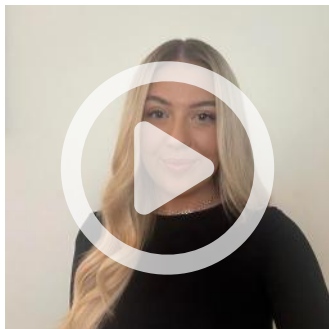
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STUDENT STORIES

Take a look at what students from beauty, digital support and sports courses have to say about what they're learning. Click on the individual pictures to read more.



*Holly Swan -
Beauty Level 3,
Certificate in Education
Level 5*



*Ezra Keldo -
T Level Digital Support*



*Thomas Gibson -
Sport Level 3*

Read more stories **here**.



Thank you for reading.



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