



DEFINING FUTURES

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 14 /// JANUARY 2024

Welcome to the latest edition of the Defining Futures newsletter which covers activities that took place from when students returned to college after half-term in October, until they broke up for the Christmas holidays in December.

What's in this issue?

This issue contains exciting news about plans for the college's new city centre campus, an update on progress of the Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre at the Wellington Road campus and pictures of when legendary pop band Slade's guitarist Dave Hill helped kick-off Christmas celebrations with a festive sing-a-long!

What's more, with students now well-settled into their courses, there's a round-up of the activities they've benefited from and taken part in to enhance their learning.

Enjoy the issue!

SLADE GUITARIST DAVE HILL SPREADS FESTIVE CHEER AT STUDENTS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

The reception area at the Wellington Road campus rocked to the sounds of Christmas music when Slade guitarist Dave Hill joined students from the Futures Foundation learning programme at their end-of-year concert and led them in a rousing rendition of the group's world-famous song 'Merry Xmas Everybody'!

The students, dressed in Christmas jumpers, Santa hats and reindeer antlers, sang and Makaton-signed the song, along with a host of other Christmas classics, with students and staff from other areas joining in the festive fun. In the 50th year since the release of the song, Dave's visit attracted lots of media attention and was featured on BBC Midlands Today, BBC Breakfast and in the Express & Star - read the article [here](#).



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CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME GATHERS PACE

An £8.1 million training centre at the Wellington Road campus in Bilston, and plans for a new state-of-the-art city centre campus have both moved a step closer in the last few weeks, with both developments set to transform the college estate and create learning opportunities for thousands of students from across the region.



ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMOTIVE CENTRE – WELLINGTON ROAD CAMPUS

Erection of the steel frame of the new centre is now complete, with electrical sub-station cabling and ducting completed during the October half-term break.

Take a look at time lapse footage of the installation of the frame [here](#). Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, visited the site to find out more about what the site will offer and took the opportunity to talk to current automotive and engineering students about how the new state-of-the-art facility will equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to work in their chosen industry.



CITY LEARNING QUARTER CAMPUS

Work on the new City Learning Quarter city centre site is set to get underway following the appointment of the main contractor by City of Wolverhampton Council.

The £61 million scheme, which will establish transformational facilities for the college, Adult Education and Central Library, is set to be completed for the 2025/26 academic year and will enable the relocation of facilities and courses from the Paget Road campus and improve skills and employment outcomes for people across the city and wider region.

Mal Cowgill, principal and chief executive of the college, said: “The appointment of the main construction contractor marks a significant milestone in making the City Learning Quarter vision a reality. “The city centre campus will transform our student experience and make a tangible impact on the city, offering first class facilities in key areas of employment to the thousands of people set to walk through its doors.”

For the latest news on the campus transformation programme, visit www.wolvcoll.ac.uk/our-college/campus-transformation/



STUDENTS LEAD REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

In November, as the nation paused to honour those who suffered or died at war, students doing uniformed public services qualifications held a remembrance parade at the Wellington Road campus.



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Around 70 students, from five detachments, wearing their college-branded uniforms and remembrance poppies, formed up in the college quadrangle and two standard bearers paraded in the union jack and college flag.



The service included a reading of the Ode of Remembrance by a health and social care student, which will also read in Italian by an IT student, before the assembled company were called to attention for a two-minute silence at 11am.

A recording of the service can be watched on the college’s YouTube channel [here](#).

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STUDENTS MEET SIR KEIR STARMER

Students and staff were invited to put questions to Sir Keir Starmer, Leader of the Opposition, when he visited the offices of the Express & Star newspaper in November.



The group - comprising A Level students and those studying for automotive and engineering diplomas - proudly represented the college on a panel comprising Express & Star readers, business leaders and pupils from local schools who asked a series of searching questions about pensions, the state of the high street, health and education during a question and answer session.

Our students raised some of the key issues facing young people in the region and were afterwards described by Sir Keir as happy, confident and articulate.

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CROSS-COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

ENRICHMENT WEEK

During the termly enrichment week, students participated in a range of activities to enhance their learning - many of which are detailed in the individual curriculum sections below - but there were also a range of cross-college sessions and workshops arranged to benefit all students, whatever course they are studying.



The SAME Academy gave a talk on road safety and the importance of responsible driving.

Representatives from training provider Workpays hosted a workshop on apprenticeships, with students able to find out about the programmes and levels of study available, as well as how to find the perfect apprenticeship in their chosen sector.



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Students gained valuable information on how to navigate the online digital world safely and responsibly at a workshop delivered by Changing Lives which shed light on the importance of cybersecurity and the potential dangers to be aware of.



Online safety session delivered by Changing Lives.



Puppeteer from Routes Puppets gives an inspirational talk to students.

And a puppeteer from Routes Puppets delivered an inspirational talk and presentation to students about British values, sexual harassment awareness, gangs and drug awareness.

2023 STUDENT WELCOME SURVEY

The annual Student Welcome Survey is carried out in the first half-term of every academic year to gain the views of students on a range of topics as they settle into their courses.

The results of this year's survey show:



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CHILDREN IN NEED

Pudsey Bear enrolled as a temporary student in November and had fun at the Paget Road campus collecting donations for Children in Need. He visited the automotive workshop, got his lunch in the Food Hub and even gave a presentation on the campus transformation project!



GETTING LOCAL PEOPLE IN TO WORK

A former bar worker who changed to a career in social care after doing a sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) at the college was honoured at a regional awards ceremony. Claire Smith, aged 31, was told about the college's health and social care SWAP after becoming unemployed and, after completing the course, was offered a job as a carer at Handle with Care (Black Country) Ltd. Since starting the job, Claire has completed a range of industry-recognised qualifications and was named winner of the Best Carer Award at the recent Black Country Excellence in Care Awards.



Participants in the college's student support sector-based work academy programme got hands-on with state-of-the-art C Pen scanners which convert text to audio, making it accessible to students of all abilities.



WELCOMING NEW STAFF

New members of staff at the college attended a welcome event, enabling them to meet the executive and senior management teams, find out more about the college's mission and ethos and take part in fun activities with fellow new recruits.



SHOWCASING RESEARCH

Leading further education experts shared their insights into the future of the sector at a conference at the Paget Road campus. Over 100 delegates, from 24 organisations, attended the Hear Me, See Me - Research in FE conference to find out about how innovative approaches and emerging technologies are shaping the future of further education. Guests heard from speakers from the college and University of Wolverhampton on topics including the impact of artificial intelligence on teachers and students, teacher mental health, intellectual, social and



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emotional growth through higher education, harnessing the power of technology, learning through creative writing, and equality and diversity.

SHOWCASING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Members of Jisc West Midlands met up at the Wellington Road campus to get the latest insights into how artificial intelligence and emerging technologies can transform teaching and learning.



SHOWCASING FORMER STUDENTS

A two-time alumnus of the college who is now a senior reporter at the Express & Star popped into college to talk about his time as a student and his career journey since gaining his qualifications.

See what James had to say **here**.



A writer of children’s books, who attended the college’s free social media bootcamp to boost his online presence, saw phenomenal results when his sales increased from 100 books per quarter to 10,000 books in the weeks after completing his course - and, once he receives his royalties in April 2024 he will be taking on a paid social media executive to manage his social media while he concentrates on writing.



Find out more about how the college helped him **here**.

Read what other current and former students and apprentices have to say about college life, and what they’ve done since completing their qualifications, **here**.

CURRICULUM ROUND-UP

APPRENTICESHIPS

The team hosted a workshop for young people where they could find out more about apprenticeships and the training on offer, get help with searching for and applying for vacancies, producing a CV and writing an application covering letter, as well as participate in interviews and receive feedback on areas for improvement.



Staff from the team also represented the college at the West Midlands Engineering Skills conference at the at The Black Country & Marches Institute of Technology and were able to showcase the college’s engineering apprenticeships to delegates and employers from across the region.



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AUTOMOTIVE

Students working towards automotive qualifications who participated in a workshop with representatives from Lucas Oil Products UK (reported in the last newsletter) received certificates from the company to recognise their participation in the event.



They also got the lowdown on how to find the best components and trade deals at a workshop with a representative from Halfords.



Halfords representative visits the college.

Meanwhile, students from Nelson Mandela University in South Africa completed electric vehicle qualifications at the college's Electric vehicle and Green Technologies Centre in Wednesfield.



EV students from Nelson Mandela University.

BAKERY

Students studying for bakery qualifications got into the Christmas spirit producing hundreds of mince pies and lots of festive-themed iced rich fruit cakes which were sold to staff and students in the on-site bakery at the Wellington Road campus.



CONSTRUCTION

Construction students were given exclusive behind-the-scenes access to the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre and found out about the work involved in the project from Nick Reay, senior project manager at construction company Speller Metcalfe, as well as learning more about the company and career opportunities available.

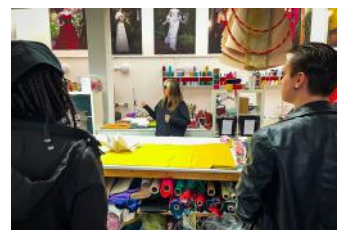


Students doing electrical qualifications jumped aboard Project EV's mobile experience van to talk to representatives from the company about electric vehicle charging technology and career paths in the fast-evolving sector.



CREATIVE ARTS

Students working towards the UAL Applied General Extended Diploma in Art and Design headed off to The Couture Company at the Minerva Works in Digbeth, Birmingham as part of a collaborative project with



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the company which designs and makes bespoke wedding dresses for the 'alternative' bride.

The students, who are working in teams to design and create a range of requirements, including upcycling a wedding dress, toured the studios, met the company owner and her team and got one-to-one advice on their design ideas.



Students from the course, as well as those studying A Level art, attended Wolverhampton Art Gallery to find out more about the annual ARTiculation competition, run by the National Gallery, in London.

The national speaking competition, for 16-19-year-olds, gives participants the opportunity to research and speak about a particular piece of art - and the event enabled them to pick up public speaking skills from art gallery staff, attend workshops in research, writing and oral presentation, see a display of work by legendary British pop artist Derek Boshier and practice their new skills in talking about it to fellow attendees.



Meanwhile, former photography student Hannah Lunn returned to college to talk to current students about working in the industry and running her own business



CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS

Students on early years courses got hands-on experience of caring for babies through the use of baby infant simulators, bringing their learning to life and enabling them to use the skills they've learnt so far in looking after the realistic models.



Students found out about career pathways, industry opportunities and university qualifications in an inspiring lecture from Dr Faye Stanley, principal lecturer and head of department for early childhood, young people and developing professional practice at the University of Wolverhampton.



ENGINEERING

Students gained insights into the career opportunities in the engineering and aerospace industries from representatives from Tata Steel and Collins Aerospace, and also found out about some of the largescale projects that both companies had been involved in.



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Just before Christmas, students were kept busy designing festive mugs and following a manufacturing process to bring their designs to life.

Take a look at the manufacturing process **here**.



FUTURES FOUNDATION LEARNING

Students volunteered to help prepare for Bilston's Excel Church's Christmas Fest - wrapping over 300 presents, decorating the church's Christmas tree and producing marketing materials to advertise the event.



And there was cause for celebration when the Futures foundation football team won a recent home match against a team from Walsall College. The match was very close, with a final score of 5-4 and student Brandon Williams was named man of the match for scoring a hat-trick.



HAIR & BEAUTY

Hairdressing students took part in a theatrical hair and makeup workshop, while students working towards beauty qualifications got hands-on mastering the application of nail and gel polishes, learnt about lashlifts and lamination, carried out massages, hand masks, algae seaweed detox body wraps and vacuum suction detox body treatments and showed off their creative side with the application of henna.

They also got tips on how to set up their own business from Iona Axinte, founder of Moonshot Global Consulting Ltd, and found out about the role of the Federation of Holistic Therapists from complementary therapist Barbara Birch.



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Health & Social Care students raised £231 for Children in Need by hosting a bake sale selling cakes and samosas, holding a raffle, running a jewellery stall and organising a football shootout competition.



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Student Jessica May James Causer - who has done over 100 hours of voluntary work helping patients and staff at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust - won the Rising Star award at the organisation's charity arm's recent awards.



In a further boost for the trust, students worked together to raise over £120 which was used to purchase a selection of games for the children's ward and fragility and dementia ward, food items for the staff foodbank and personal hygiene items for inpatients.



TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Travel and tourism students had fun at the seaside on a trip to Blackpool where they found out about the Pleasure Beach's business and marketing strategies and visited the world-famous Blackpool Tower.



Students also took part in virtual work experience in the aviation industry - through the Soaring to Success initiative run by educational charity The Air League - and found out about job opportunities in the RAF, CAA, British Airways, Boeing, Air Traffic Control and the Department for Transport.



UNIFORMED PUBLIC SERVICES

Students put their skills to the test when they took part in a range of activities, including archery and a cannon ball run, hosted by the Army during enrichment week.



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