



DEFINING FUTURES

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 16 /// MARCH 2024

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Defining Futures newsletter for the 2023/24 academic year which covers activities from when students returned to college after the February half-term break, until they broke up for Easter.

What's in this issue?

This issue features news of the milestone in the construction of the college's Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre, the launch of the new Transport, Rail and Infrastructure Training Academy (TRIA), and details of a partnership with Coventry University for students who come from families with no history of studying for a degree.

Plus, as in every edition, there's a round-up of wider college activities, including opportunities that students at all levels have taken to enhance their learning, the opportunity to read about what some current students have to say about their courses and find out what past students have achieved since completing their qualifications.

Enjoy the read!

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMOTIVE CENTRE REACHES MILESTONE

Construction of the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre at the Wellington Road campus has reached another milestone.

The £8.1 million centre - the first phase of the council's City Learning Quarter masterplan - is now fully weathertight and continues to be on-track to be completed this summer.

The latest stage follows positive progress since October by contractor Speller Metcalfe, which has seen the steel framework installed, the ground and first floor slabs poured, block work for the external and internal walls laid, the building fully clad and the roof installed.

The centre has been designed for automotive, electric vehicle and engineering studies and will be equipped with a range of industry-standard equipment including a Lucas Nuelle training rig and Bosch diagnostic equipment in the automotive area and robots, 3D printers, laser cutters, lathes and millers and



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a specialist CAD room featuring AutoCAD and SolidWorks software in the engineering department. Mal Cowgill, principal and CEO of the college said: "We are delighted to have reached such a major milestone in the construction of our Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre, which will play a vital role in creating the industry leaders of the future in Wolverhampton and beyond."

Read more about the latest milestone [here](#).

Keep up-to-date with progress of the centre [here](#).

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MAYOR OPENS NEW REGION-WIDE COLLEGE RAIL TRAINING ACADEMY

A new region-wide rail training academy, developed by the college to increase employment opportunities by giving local people the skills needed to work in the sector, has been officially opened by Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands.



Rob Finney Photography

The Transport, Rail and Infrastructure Academy (TRIA), developed in partnership with National Infrastructure Solutions (NIS) - a leading provider in the rail, civil engineering and utilities industries - has been set up to increase employment opportunities for local people and meet the demand for skilled operatives to work in the construction and maintenance of train lines, tram routes and stations across the region.

The launch took place at the TRIA's new site at the Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation (BCIMO)'s Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre in Zoological Drive in Dudley, where the Mayor also cut the ribbon to open a new Signalling Academy.

Read more about the launch [here](#).

Find out more about TRIA [here](#).

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PARTNERSHIP ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO APPLY TO UNIVERSITY

Students at the college who are considering doing a degree are to benefit from a partnership with Coventry University.

The university's Phoenix Partnership works with students to demystify degrees and explain the institution's application process.

Students eligible for the scheme will find out about the university's admissions policy and how to submit their application through the UCAS system, as well as benefiting from a one A-level grade (or equivalent) reduction in entry requirements when applying for a degree starting in September 2024.



Under the scheme, 41 college students have applied to the university for September and will also benefit from free coach travel to open days, discovery days and subject taster sessions, as well



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as advice on choosing accommodation and applying for funding to help with tuition fees and living costs.

Read more about the partnership [here](#).

SUPPORTING LOCAL PEOPLE INTO WORK

Students on the social media bootcamp programme - run in partnership with BlackRook Academy - visited the Mount Hotel to gather content ahead of being interviewed for the position of social media & marketing executives. The position was offered to course participant Katrina Laksa who is now excelling in her role!



In partnership with NHS West Midlands, the college delivered a four-week in-house ESOL programme for staff at New Cross Hospital to improve their language skills and communication with patients.

SUPPORTING STAFF

The college's Defining Futures Learning programme for staff has been reviewed and updated to reflect the latest trend and technologies which will equip them with the skills and confidence to use technology more effectively.

The programme - sponsored by Vitalize IT - consists of four pathways with activities, workshops and independent learning targeted at different roles within the organisation.



PROMOTING THE COLLEGE

Staff from the automotive, engineering and hair and beauty departments, along with members of the apprenticeship team, showcased what the college has offer at the Telford Skills Show.

The teams ran a range of hands-on have-a-go activities - including making engineering circuits and controlling a robot - and spoke to visitors to the stand about courses and qualifications, careers and apprenticeship opportunities in different sectors and the new Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre and City Learning Quarter campus.



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Helene Dearn OBE, group director West Midlands at the Department for Work and Pensions, got to see first-hand how the college is supporting local people into work during a visit to the Careers and Skills Hub at the Wellington Road campus.



Helene (pictured right, with principal Mal Cowgill) met students on a Preparation for Work course, observed a job match session with clients and Job Centre work coaches, found out about a partnership with Bilston Job Centre work coaches and heard about the success of the college's 'Into Employment' programmes and skills bootcamps.

Conrad Taylor, business, learning and technologies manager, represented the college at Bett - Europe's premier education show - as a panelist at Google's AI presentation and is seated on the left of the picture.



What's more Conrad was named as a finalist in the Jisc Community Champion Awards 2024!

PROMOTING PROGRESSION

During National Careers Week, a higher education fair at the Paget Road and Wellington Road campuses welcomed representatives from universities from across the region so that students could find out about higher education opportunities after completing their qualifications at college.



As part of the week, students also had the opportunity to meet employers and find out about work experience opportunities with a range of companies including Aldi, Budweiser Brewing Group UK&I and West Midlands Police.



To encourage students to think about their future careers, a speed-meeting event with representatives from a range of different companies gave students direct access to employers to find out about career pathways and what working in their chosen industry is like.



CURRICULUM ROUND-UP

AUTOMOTIVE

Students studying for automotive qualifications found out about employment opportunities in the sector when representatives from automotive recruitment specialists Autotech Recruit paid a visit to the Paget Road campus.



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Meanwhile, curriculum manager Stephanie Jones featured in an Institute of the Motor Industry Real Voices campaign which showcases the career of a range of people working in the automotive sector.

Read Stephanie’s story **here**.



BAKERY

Bakery students had a busy few weeks flipping pancakes for Shrove Tuesday, hand-making bread using natural ingredients and not containing additives or commercial yeast as part of Real Bread Week, and producing a host of delicious Easter goodies - including bunnies, hot cross buns and cupcakes - to sell in the on-site bakery shop at the Wellington Road campus.



CONSTRUCTION

Students on the new construction T Level programme visited the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales to learn about renewable technologies, tackling climate change and green energy.



CREATIVE ARTS

Art and Design students took part in a collaborative project with Jo Bromley, a bespoke alternative wedding dress designer from Birmingham-based The Couture Company. Working in teams, students were given four months to transform existing wedding dresses into unique designs based on specific themes, with the winning team invited to visit the company and see the work that goes into making a bespoke wedding dress.



Illustration students worked with local authors Andrew Brazier and Gillian Pearce, from the Moseley Writers Group, to produce drawings for a new children’s book called Bebo the Hero, about a brave cat! After reviewing the entries, the authors selected Callum Donnelly as the winner stating that his outstanding illustrations perfectly captured the essence of the story. Callum was awarded a £100 prize and his illustrations will be featured on the front cover of the book, as well as throughout the story.



Photography and media students gained insights into working in the industry from two inspirational



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guest speakers. Photographer Gary Trueman (pictured right, centre) shared his expertise on concert and alternative fashion photography, while former student Saskia Masuan shared her experiences of working in journalism and visual photography.



Picture credit: Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Former performing arts student Nicole Louise Lewis (pictured far right, centre) came back to Wolverhampton in the role of Aragon in the national tour of Six the Musical, and current students are in rehearsal for their final major project end-of-year show, Little Shop of Horrors.

ENGINEERING

Students working towards engineering qualifications took part in an interactive workshop led by Adam Tipper from Next Gen Makers. They took part in a virtual reality session and learnt about careers in the industry, including casting and opportunities in the wider sector.



FUTURES FOUNDATION LEARNING

Students from the Futures programme set up stalls at the Wellington Road campus selling a range of Easter-themed treats and running raffles with fantastic prizes including a chocolate hamper and a giant teddy bear.



They have also been selling sweets in support of local charities, donated £20 worth of food to the Good Shepherd Centre and are currently fundraising for the Wolverhampton Refugee and Migrant Centre.



The students also benefitted from a visit from Sarah Fletcher from Mencap who talked about the role of the organisation, opportunities in the workplace and career paths, and attended a workshop run by the Mitie Foundation which covered preparing a CV, interview skills and opportunities in the workplace.



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Health and social care student Jess James-Causar has been bringing comfort to dementia patients through her work as a volunteer at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust.

Jess, who is studying for the Level 3 diploma, is a clinical volunteer on Ward



Picture credit: The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust



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C56 and has been crafting ‘twiddle muffs’ and blankets adorned with bells, ribbons, buttons, beads, zippers and pom-poms which have a soothing and calming effect for patients.

Read the full story **here**.

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SPORT AND FITNESS

Students from the Football Academy - run by the college in partnership with Wolverhampton Wanderers’ official charity Wolves Foundation - took part in a coaching session with former player and foundation ambassador Karl Henry.

The session focused on possession-based football, playing out from the back and showing students new ways for progressing up the pitch.



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UNIFORMED PUBLIC SERVICES

Police cadets, taking part in a programme run in partnership with West Midlands Police, learnt about the core values of Sikhism during a visit to the Nanaksar Thath Sikh Gurdwara.

They learnt about the core values of the religion – including hard work, respect for all faiths and selfless service (sewa) – explored the significance of the Five Ks (kesh, kangha, kara, kachera and kirpan) and enjoyed a delicious meal in the Langar hall.



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TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Travel and tourism students got a behind the scenes view into the workings of Birmingham Airport during a visit to its Learning Hub.

They explored the passenger journey from arrival to departure, learnt about job opportunities – including cabin crew, ground agents and retail positions - found out about new airlines and routes being launched this year, and had the chance to meet cabin crew and watch planes take off and land.



Students also learnt more about working in the sector during a visit to the Institute of Travel and Tourism’s Future You event at University College Birmingham.

This annual event offered insights into the aviation, hospitality, tourism and travel industries and the group attended a presentation by renowned travel journalist and broadcaster Simon Calder.



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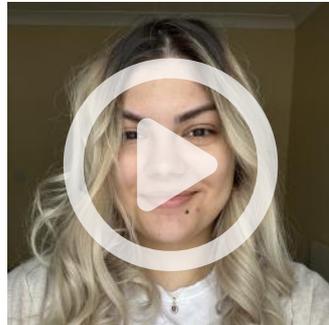
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STUDENT STORIES

Take a look at what some of our current students have to say about their courses, and what former students have achieved since gaining their qualifications.

Click on their pictures to read more...

CURRENT STUDENTS



Anil Harrar -
Horizon 1

Maria Emilia Chirita -
ICT Level 3

Doina Surchin
Computing Level 1

FORMER STUDENTS



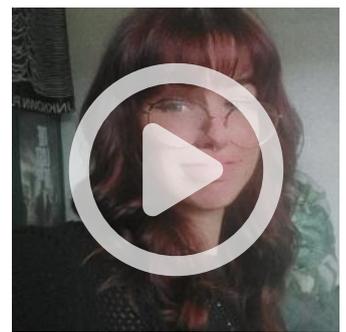
Hayden Flynn -
Uniformed Public
Services Level 3



Priyasasha Kumari
Performing Arts Level 3



Kayleigh Potts
Access to HE
(Health Professionals)



Caitlin Richards -
Art and Design
Foundation Level



Tasha Sheridan -
Social Media Content
Creator Level 4 Award



Holly Winby -
Nebosh National
General Certificate

Read more student stories [here](#).



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