

22.05.2020

WIRRAL MET UPDATE



Principal's Update

I can't believe how long it's been since I last chatted with you over a coffee, called in to one of your fantastic learning sessions, or popped in to your office to see how the latest innovations are going! That said, I have never been so busy as I continue to witness your innovation, commitment and talent helping so many students and their families. Thank you colleagues!

This edition comes at the end of a busy Mental Health Awareness week and I would like to thank our HR and Marketing teams for facilitating this and everyone who has been actively involved in so many examples of how we can, through kindness, make a difference. My grandmother used to often say, 'Kindness and manners cost nothing and you should always remember that'; this is something I believe and always try to live by myself. In this edition there are so many examples of kindness and it is a great privilege to work in a sector and with a team that holds the value and importance of making a difference to lives, at the heart of everything we do.

As we embark on half term, I hope you all enjoy the sunshine, keep safe and I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Thanks for your continued support, which is valued beyond words.

Sue

Updates from curriculum teams across the College

Science

It has been a busy couple of weeks for the Science team, with the BSc (Hons) Chemistry students sitting their end of year exams, and in some cases, their final exams. We wish the students every success as their progress on from College.

We are so proud of Biology Tutor Ben, who recently took part in the 2.6 Challenge with the aim of raising money for the Proud Trust – an organisation that supports young people within the LGBT+ community to empower themselves, to make a positive change for themselves and their communities. They provide LGBT+ safe spaces for 11,000 children and young people each year, and have adapted during the pandemic to providing virtual support where possible. Ben completed a 26-mile bike ride (which was actually nearer 35 miles!) through Manchester and Knutsford – and along with other participants, ended up raising over £1,200 for this worthy cause. Well done Ben!

Ben said, "Throughout this period it has been important for my own health and mindset to keep active. Since lockdown started I have been cycling a lot. Completing the 35-mile ride from Manchester city centre to Tatton Park along the canal route was challenging on the uphill parts

but an enjoyable experience seeing new-born geese and swans and taking in what I could see on route. The important thing to me was this was for an amazing cause and I have helped raise money for the LGBT charity and in the process helped my own fitness.”



Electrical Installation

Our Electrical installation students have been keeping busy. Level 3 students have been providing regular updates on what they have been doing during lockdown including student, Xander who has applied to continue studying Electrical Engineering at university. Student Mike has taken up astronomy and been watching the International Space Station and Starlink satellites pass over during the evening.

Second year student Connor spent six hours jet washing in his garden and was so impressed by the result he's now thinking of starting a jet washing business for the days when he's not in college, once the lockdown is over. Callum has started to learn a new language, German, and impressed his tutor by writing to him in German. Nathan has learned to play the base guitar and told his tutor, "I have been learning how to play a precision bass guitar during quarantine where I have learnt where each chord is, how to tune a base, learning about the many playing styles and how to customize the sound output using a device to connect my bass guitar to an application on my computer."

As well as studying, Level 1 students have also been keeping occupied with Ben fitting decking in his garden and also refurbishing his shed. Jack who bought his first car, told his tutors, "As it is my first car I have washed it and cleaned it up and bought a few things for it like, floor mats, gaiters, LED bulbs and more.' This has given Jack a clear focus and something to look forward to when the time comes for him to start his driving lessons.

After the success of the Easter break family fun picture quiz, here's some pictures of another quiz created by tutor Tony C, whose wife has once again kindly donated a prize. This quiz is now open to both staff and Construction students; quiz entrants need to identify what each of the photos are, and where they are (or were) located. Send your answers to Tony via email! Thanks Tony, you're quite the Quiz Master!



Carpentry & Joinery

Level 1 Carpentry and Joinery student Brandon has been using the joinery skills he learned at College to design and make a storage bench from pallet wood. He is very proud of this and is happy to share his news in our update – take a look at the photos of his inspiring work.



Computing

The Computing team has been developing their use of Google hangouts, email and the VLE to keep in touch with students. This week we've had a focus on mental health and tutor Andrew has sent inspiring messages and a mental health questionnaire to check on each student's health and wellbeing. This would traditionally be a stressful time for students completing their end of year assessments but the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic in addition, can be overwhelming and we are mindful of the importance of supporting mental health and wellbeing. Andy has had really positive feedback from students, including Sonia, who thanked the team for the support we've given her during this challenging time.

We've also had a great response from students regarding their 'Next Step' reviews over the past week and lots of students have confirmed they want to continue with, as they progress to their next level of study.

Animal Management

The Animal Management team are really missing each other's company and so have set weekly challenges to try to keep up team morale; unfortunately, the "get out and walk challenge" led to Stacey twisting her ankle, ouch! Our next challenge is baking.

Level 1 students are honing their research skills with individual research topics that they have picked, including "Are Zoos Good or Bad?" Level 2 students are working hard on Genetics modules whilst Level 3 first year students are using their time to research animal welfare; they all have an opinion on the Netflix documentary 'Tiger King'. Our Level 3 Extended Diploma students are looking forward to university life from September.

Meanwhile, Maui the hamster is living his best life with his foster family!



Art

This week saw the submission deadline for all BA (Hons) Illustration with Animation Degree work. Students have done a great job dealing with all the changes and challenges of lockdown. There have been lots of inspiring projects in the making and we look forward to showcasing the students' work on our online gallery soon.

The BA (Hons) Fine Art Degree Show, 'Diverse Directions' is still online and can be [viewed here](#). The Degree Show has been profiled on the popular website, [Art in Liverpool](#). The fantastic work is a creative oasis for everyone to enjoy at this time.

Access to HE – Nursing and Allied Healthcare Professions

Access to HE Nursing and Allied Healthcare Professions student Leah has been working in Arrowe Park Hospital with Covid-19 patients (pictured below). She explained, "I'm on Ward 36 as a Clinical Support Worker. It's a weird time on the ward because you go into a caring job to look after people which requires so much personal and emotional contact but caring

through the pandemic has changed as you're told to spend as little time as possible with the patients and PPE comes first.

"This was really challenging for me and most of the staff on my ward. However, considering this is a new pandemic and health professionals didn't really know what to expect at the start, every nurse, doctor, health care worker and everyone else have adapted and are doing an amazing job!" What an inspiration Leah is – we are very proud of her achievements and clap for her and her colleagues every Thursday.



Health & Social Care

It's not just our students who are inspirational in their support of Wirral Met College. Part-time Trainer/Assessor Karen (pictured below) also works part-time as a nurse for the Acute Visiting Service, visiting private, residential and nursing homes across the local community.



Karen volunteered at the Nightingale North West field hospital in Manchester to support her nursing colleagues to care for the very sick. She told us about her experience: "As an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, I felt my nursing skills and experience could help. I found the Nightingale overwhelming and impressive; there is an army of medical, nursing, administration, cleaning, security and catering staff supporting and feeding each of the

volunteers. The public have been wonderful and provide little touches of donated hand cream, toiletries and food, as well as cards of support and rainbow pictures from children.

“The patients in our care are very sick and need a lot of caring input. Our aim is always to return them home well. This is not always possible which is very sad and tough on everyone. As part of my role, I provide support and guidance for my healthcare learners taking their apprenticeship diploma in health care - who are themselves working on the front line. I am in awe of their bravery and commitment in such trying times. To all those people who have contacted me, I send my sincere thanks.”

Health & Social Care students of the month include Grace from Year 1 Pathway to Nursing, who has kept up to date and more with her work and has gained a place at Salford University to study Child Nursing. Congratulations, Grace!



Second year Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care student Millie (pictured) is working in a care home in Birkenhead, providing personal care and end of life support for individuals. Fortunately, there have been no cases of Covid19 in this care home. Millie is applying the knowledge she learnt in College about managing infection control effectively in the workplace, and she is looking forward to progressing to study Nursing at The University of Chester in September.

Another second year Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care student, Alisha has been working in care but unfortunately contracted Covid19. She has been very unwell but is recovering well and looking forward to when her isolation period ends so that she can return to work – evidencing true commitment to her career.

Travel & Tourism

Second year Extended Diploma in Travel and Tourism student Rebecca videoed herself working as a tour guide to promote Eastham Country Park. This assessment was originally supposed to be carried out in the Country Park; planning material including maps that had been produced prior to the start of home-based learning. Rebecca has improvised with fantastic creativity and imagination to complete this task from her garden. Dressed in business attire, she produced a professional presentation, which included Eastham Country Park's history and its importance to the tourism industry in Wirral, along with a marketing pitch offering promotional materials to encourage visits to the park.

Students of the month are Olivia and Kelsie who have completed all of the tasks that have been set during lockdown, to an excellent standard. Well done!

Hospitality & Catering

Kerry is a part time Level 2 Diploma in Professional Cookery student who has been keeping in touch with tutor Ada creating dishes through stretching and challenging her learning ahead of schedule. She has sourced all the ingredients, followed recipe and method sheets to produce the dishes (pictured below) and even involved her son in the final tasting.



Progression to FE

Students of the month are Alfie, who has completed two full units remotely with the support of his tutor, in spite of challenges whilst studying from home. Well done also to Cameron, who completed all his GCSE Mathswatch work to an excellent standard; his maths tutor gave him a commendation because of this supreme effort.

The team also wanted to recognise the staff who have been supporting Progression to FE students. Learning Support Assistant Jane has gone above and beyond in her efforts to engage with the students while lockdown carries on. She is always positive and cheerful, helping students stay positive and resolve any issues that may arise.

The team also wanted to thank maths tutor Pauline whose efforts to ensure the students in her classes are not disadvantaged by this pandemic are nothing short of heroic. Her willingness to adapt to any situation in order to help the students improve is inspiring.

Early Years

Well done to Early Years student of the month Zoe who has completed her Level 1 course and will be continuing her Early Years studies to build towards her dream career in childhood education...we are very proud of you!

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

As we near the end of Ramadan, some of our students have found the challenges of lockdown particularly hard. Tutors have injected new energy and enthusiasm by using Microsoft Teams for their online lessons, with students enjoying seeing one another, at least 'virtually'. Peer support and encouragement for learning really steps up when students are able to make contact in this way.

British Sign Language (BSL)

The BSL team has been developing their use of Microsoft Teams to support students with our new virtual way of working, and they say it has re-energised their remote teaching as they can now have more than one or two students interacting together online. Students have very much enjoyed this approach and student Sheona sent in her feedback, saying "This looks really good. Thank you for doing everything to keep us all going with BSL."



Student Voice

Our Students' Union keeps topping up their VLE with lots of activities to enrich learning and life and tutors are reminded to encourage students to visit the site which is updated daily with various information and ideas on how to maintain motivation levels during the current situation. We are always looking for suggestions from students so do please get in touch and pass these on to the Students' Union team.

Student Rep Council meetings were due to take place before half term, so in their place a short survey / feedback form has been sent out to all Course Reps. Student Voice Reps will then contact students directly to discuss after half term.

Student Choice Star Award staff nominations are in full swing; there is still time for students to vote by accessing the nomination form on the Students' Union page of the Virtual Campus, before the deadline today, Friday 22nd May.

During Mental Health Awareness week, students have been contacted each day via College email regarding various activities, challenges, competitions with vital information on, and links to Mental Health Awareness resources.

Virtual Open Day

Wednesday 24th June, 3pm - 7pm

Learn more about courses starting in September 2020!

REGISTER
YOUR PLACE



Our first **Virtual Open Day** will take place on **Wednesday 24th June 2020 from 3-7pm**. The Open Day will involve FE and HE Live Talk presentations, videos, virtual campus tours and Live Chat with curriculum areas. Sessions will include information about student life at Wirral Met, additional learning support, financial support, applying online and next steps.

Please can you share details with your friends and family and social media; they can register on our [website](#) .

Supporting your Health and Wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic

There have been a lot of activities taking place during **Mental Health Awareness week** – take a look at the coverage on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Don't forget that there is a wealth of information and videos to support your health and wellbeing, which is available on the staff intranet [Well-being Wheel](#).

WELLBEING WHEEL

As a College we provide health, wellbeing and enrichment for our employees through a huge range of events, activities and benefits.

- > Family friendly and flexible working policies
- > Occupational health and sickness benefit scheme
- > Leisure and gym access
- > Discounted access to Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy and Sports Massage



**MENTAL HEALTH
AWARENESS WEEK
KINDNESS** 18-24 MAY 2020