

3 April 2020

WIRRAL MET UPDATE



Principal's Update

I cannot praise staff enough for the fantastic way in which you have embraced this challenge. I have been speaking with staff in many different roles and we all agree that, when this is over, the way we work will be changed forever, as some of our new approaches are proving to be very successful. As we start the Spring Break I hope that you and your families have a safe holiday and, mindful of the tragic scenes we are all witnessing as the pandemic progresses, I look forward to the time we can all return to our pre-Covid19 lives. Government has made it clear that the initial time frame for social distancing has been extended and at this point in time, I cannot tell you when we will be able to re-open the buildings. So, until that time, I look forward to continuing our work together, as we run our 'digital' Wirral Met College. This will certainly be a chapter of our history that will be referenced for many years to come..... the best way to see how we coped with this is to read some of the highlights from our teams. Enjoy these snippets of success, stay home, stay safe and together, we will save lives.

With kindest regards and appreciation.

Sue Higginson
Principal

Updates from curriculum teams across the College

Employer Services and Apprenticeships

During these difficult times we are proud to be supporting all of the employers that we work with and we are committed to working with them to develop their apprentices and support their staff training. It is particularly good to hear that a number of our Business/Management apprentices have continued to make significant progress in their learning, despite a high proportion of them working within an NHS Trust at a time when the Trusts are our front-line team helping to save lives. Other key partners, such as Magenta, are continuing to support their tenants and maintain their service, with many being vulnerable, so it is important that we continue to support their apprentices, who are also front-line workers. Our Employer Services team's Trainer Assessors are working remotely to support apprentices employed by hundreds of employers and our Apprenticeship Manager, John, praised the team saying ***"This is just outstanding and an absolute credit to the team and the quality of pastoral (as well as educational) support they provide."***

Student Laurie R who is on a Traineeship programme at Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust, was just two weeks into his placement when the impact of COVID-19 challenges hit. Laurie made such an impact that he has been offered a job and is now working on the clinical systems that support patient care. Well done Laurie!

Animal Management

Daily 'Zoom meetings' ensure that the team are in constant touch, reviewing the progress of their students, as well as ensuring they are safe and working hard. Tutors have also been contacting parents and this has been met by some very positive responses. This week's successes include:

- Most Level 3 students have completed their latest assignments engaging in a range of IT solutions, including email, Google Docs and the Virtual Campus. Others are being guided through the last lap of their assignment, with clear targets to complete.
- Two Extended Diploma students who had limited access to IT at home made sure it didn't stop them and they hand-wrote their assignments and accompanied it with over 35 photographs of their work. Resilience and dedication at its best!
- Rebecca W, a Level 3 student completed her A4 Unit 13 in record time whilst also completing her A3 Unit 10 ahead of deadline!
- Level 1 students have engaged very well on the Animal Management forum.

Hospitality & Catering

The team is really embracing remote learning, using OneFile to capture their progress. One of our part-time NVQ level 2 Diploma in Professional Cookery students has undertaken some stretch and challenge by creating a practical dish yet to be covered as part of his qualification.

All students were provided with recipe sheets for dishes yet to be assessed and were asked to put together a plan for the dish and some suggestions on presentation. Student Robert went one stage further; he firstly tried to source the hake for the baked fish dish but couldn't, so he improvised and used cod instead (an acceptable round fish replacement). He then researched the production of the dish and suitable accompaniments on YouTube. Using these resources, he attempted the dish, documented it in pictures and uploaded a PowerPoint presentation onto OneFile as evidence, which included hyperlinks to the YouTube videos. Here's a picture of this student's work. Hope you're watching Chef Askew!

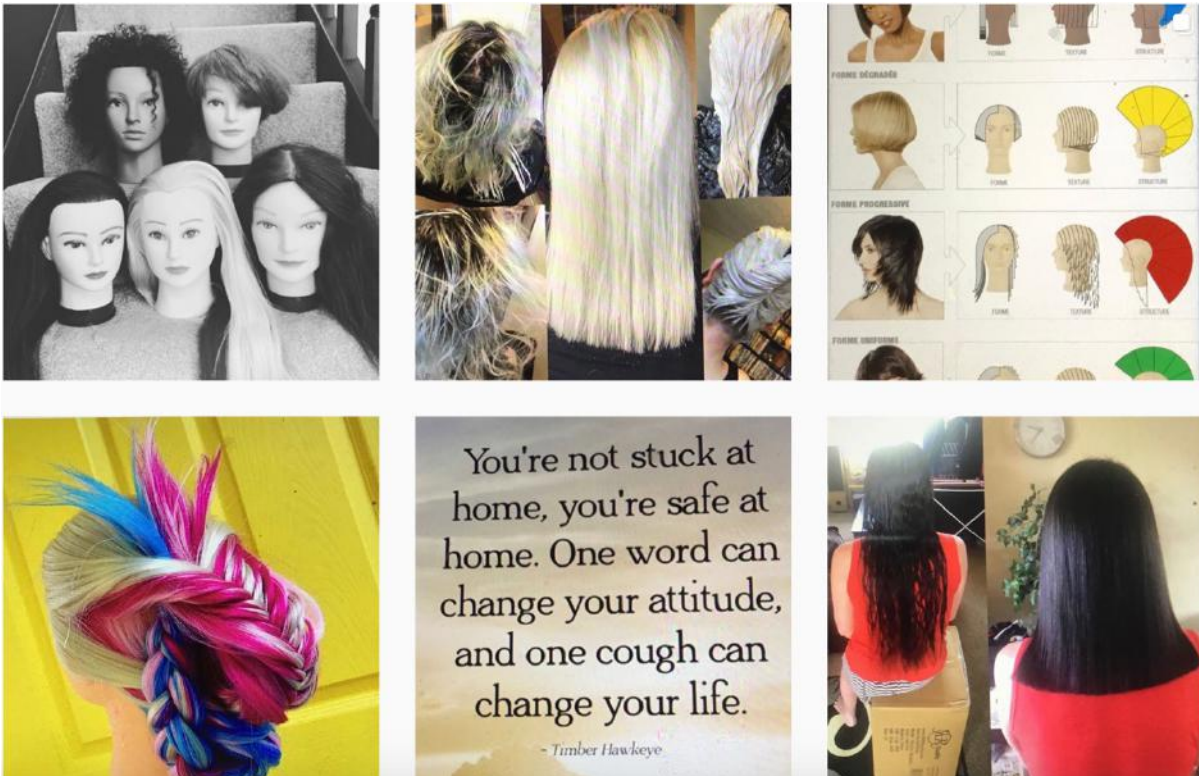


Science

Science students have adapted well to this new way of working and are in regular touch with tutors, using our Virtual Campus which has a wealth of resources, including 'Anatomy Online' to help them with their assignments. Even at this difficult time, we were thrilled to hear that one of our second year BTEC Level 3 students Meghan A, had successfully secured a Dental Nursing apprenticeship, which she will take up on the completion of her current programme. Well done Meghan - great to have such positive news!

Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy

Our team has been working really hard with all students and they are particularly focused on a number of students who have support from our wider team combining Teachers, Mentors, Safeguarding staff and Managers, making sure they are in regular touch and work together to support and follow-up concerns. Students and their parents have expressed their appreciation for this support from the team and their efforts to keep them engaged in learning. The team continues to post relevant and inspirational posts on Instagram, showcasing student work and supporting learning. [Follow the Instagram account](#)



Computing

Daily Zoom meetings enable our team to remain in touch ensuring that our students are fully engaged in learning. Dave's cat, Phil's dog and Nicky's granddaughter have also had cameo roles in the meetings, keeping them entertained! In addition to maintaining 1 to 1 communication with all students, some highlights of the week have included:

- Students on Level 2 Information and Creative Technology have been providing peer to peer feedback on each other's work for Unit 10 – Databases, via Google Hangouts.

- Level 1 students have chosen the topics they plan to research over the Spring Break and they have been completing their presentations - Developing Digital Information using IT.
- Student Connor Y thanked tutor Dale, for his continued support and shared the great news that he has successfully obtained a Degree apprenticeship with Barclays, where he will learn about different areas of technology before choosing a specialism. He will start his apprenticeship on completion of this programme.

Prep 4 Life

Prep4Life students on independent living programmes have been looking at how to deal with household waste and the benefits of recycling at home, sorting out the recycling and putting it in the correct bins (grey for recycling and green for household waste).



College Manager Karen said: ***“It is great to see the students taking responsibility at home, learning skills to help prepare them for living independently whilst also understanding the environmental benefits of recycling.”***



Tutor Cat has been developing the team's student tracker to allow all tutors to follow the remote learning that students are engaging in and Chloe's hard work has focused on students who needed more encouragement to continue learning at home. One of our parents called to thank tutor Henry for his engaging work and staying in touch with his son, which he has found really helpful.

Health and Social Care/Early Years

Whilst continuing to work closely with students to progress their learning, the Health and Social Care and Early Years team has launched a creative challenge for Level 3 and BA (Hons) Early Years students to sum up their #MyCoronaLife whilst studying on lockdown; visually or in words.

This week's successes include:

- The Pathway to Nursing final year students have **all** passed their Anatomy and Physiology exam with flying colours. They are now getting ready to start their Higher Education training to be nurses, paramedics and physiotherapists.
- Final year level 3 Health and Social Care students **all** passed their Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care external assessment.
- Final year level 3 Early Years students **all** passed their Diploma in Childcare and Education external assessment.

ESOL and Languages

Student engagement in ESOL has increased significantly this week, with students working on their English with email, phone and using WhatsApp. The success of this has been so appreciated that tutors have agreed to continue working with students over the Spring Break to keep up the momentum. Tutors are also consulting with students regarding their preferences for remote working during the Ramadan and Eid holidays and this flexibility has been very much appreciated.

Public Services and Sport

Tutors and students are doing extremely well and the team has received praise from students and parents, including one who thanked the team for the support provided for keeping their son fully occupied with learning. There have been some fantastic examples of student achievements, including the following:

- Max S, ACF Cadet and Advanced Sport student, has shown true community spirit by offering help to the vulnerable and elderly by delivering food packages to them on his bicycle. Max, who is aged 16, said, ***"I knew people would be struggling because they had to self-isolate and I really wanted to help them. People my age get a lot of bad press and I wanted to show everyone that we are not all bad. I genuinely care about people in my community. Being a cadet has given me the confidence to put myself out there, organise my time and make the most of my resources to help as many people as I can."*** Amazing effort Max, true community spirit at its finest!
- John MT, an Extended Diploma Military Prep student, has been continuing with his mentoring responsibility by not only producing excellent work but ensuring others from his troupe are doing the same.

- Charly G from level 1 Sport has made such excellent progress whilst studying from home; she is expected to complete her final assessments ahead of time.
- Lucy E and Aaron F, level 3 Sport and Exercise Science students, are also making extremely good progress and have achieved distinction grades for their recent assessment.



Student Max S showing true community spirit

Visual Arts, Music & Media

Great team work between Tutors, Faculty Administrator Natalie, Learning Mentors and Specialist Support Tutors has ensured that we wrap a lot of pastoral support around students to ensure that they are engaging in learning.

This week's successes include:

- Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative Media student Ethan H received a student commendation for his excellent film analysis work, produced in such unprecedented circumstances.
- UAL level 2 Music students have started to create online blogs to present their final major projects, which will enable them to share their projects electronically once completed.
- A couple of our talented HND Photography students did their first wedding shoot in Birkenhead Town Hall in March 2020. Although the numbers were restricted due to the Coronavirus, the students gained valuable experience and really enjoyed the chance to practise their skills whilst also observing social distancing to stay safe.
- As the end of year Art Exhibition cannot take place as usual at the Williamson Art Gallery, the team is currently working with the marketing team to create an online exhibition on the College's website. This has also provided an opportunity for Fine Art students to work with the team to develop and promote this via social media to publicise this year's Fine Art graduates' work.

Construction

There is an obvious link between construction and the economy and in an area where regeneration is closely linked to the development of our community, in Wirral Waters, we are continuing to



support the learning of the construction workforce that will turn this vision into a reality. As well as on line learning there is always time for some fun and the social media challenge called the #ToiletRollChallenge inspired Brickwork and Plastering Tutor Martin (who also coaches an Under 12s grassroots football team called Dynamo Rangers Madrid) to do 13 keep-ups replacing a football with a loo roll. This is one way of getting some fresh air and exercise whilst taking a break from working remotely – and also a good challenge for your children! Take a look at the video on our [YouTube channel](#) to see his attempt!

Students' Union / Enrichment & Engagement

The Students' Union is continuing to develop activities to engage students and two £20 Love2Shop vouchers can be won by students each week when they send in new activity ideas. Course Reps and the Students' Union Exec team are working with us to encourage ideas to update the VLE pages with activities.

Star Award Planning – Our buildings may be closed but our staff teams are inspirational and so details of the Staff Star Awards have been sent to students with a closing date set for 22nd May 2020. After half term, the team will collect all nominations and then send out the information to individuals and their managers. Watch this space for the winners, in due course!

NUS National Conference – The NUS National Conference took place virtually this week and some of our Students' Union Exec team took part; It is excellent to see the extent to which Wirral Met Students actively engage in the National Students' Union.

Pastoral Support Mentors

Our Mentors continue to work closely with their students using a range of media including text, email and phone calls. Some students require more encouragement to stay on track and following significant contact, one of our students is not only responding well to this support, he is now reaching out to his tutor for more work – a great result! Many students are really thriving and up to now have completed all work set and have been communicating really well with their tutors.

Support Workers are appreciative of the close contact from our team and the constant follow up with students to make sure that they don't feel isolated and still feel part of the College. A student who usually requires a lot of encouragement to communicate is regularly contacting his Mentor

which is a definite positive and a move forward for him. Students are finding ways to cope, in between doing their College work, one student said she is walking more than she ever has on her daily exercise routine; another has resorted to cleaning the house whilst another student is keeping fit by playing ball inside his flat - Ooops! The team has also seen a role reversal this week, with some students texting or calling their Mentor to check if they're ok, eating well and exercising – that's when you know learning is effective!

Safeguarding

A number of our students require Personal Education Plans (PEPS) which have all been completed and submitted to the relevant local authority and Virtual School. However, the message from Lorraine and her team is that there is no time to relax as the PEP requests will soon start coming through for the summer term – don't forget to respond, ensuring we continue to be timely, if you receive a request for information to help inform this process.

Positive feedback is being received from the Virtual School about the support that is being put in place for the students with Child Looked After status. There is still a lot of involvement in statutory meetings that are still taking place remotely. Day to day concerns are still being addressed and we are all aware that we have a statutory duty to safeguard our students and so even in these strange and difficult times, our procedures and resolve to support them remains unchanged. If you have a safeguarding concern about a student, please contact the Safeguarding Manager in the first instance or the Deputy Safeguarding Manager/other designated safeguarding manager (Any AP, VP or Campus Manager).

Updates from Business Support teams

Wirral Met College to postpone 2020 Further & Higher Education Awards Ceremonies - In light of the continuing impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus, it is with a heavy heart that we have decided to postpone our Further and Higher Education awards ceremonies planned for July this year and instead, we will combine our 2020 celebrations with our 2021 celebrations on Thursday 8th and Friday 9th July 2021. This is of course disappointing, but we have made this decision to protect the safety and wellbeing of our students, guests, staff and indeed the whole of our Wirral Met community. Thank you for nominating students and apprentices for awards – we will be writing to each of them to let them know they have been nominated for awards and that we will be getting in touch with them in the Spring of 2021 to invite them to the awards ceremonies in July 2021.



Marketing Digital campaigns – The Marketing team is working hard on promotional campaigns for September 2020. Our digital campaigns continue to promote courses for both adults and HE students. This week, our Foundation Degree Computer Science feature appeared on the [Echo online](#) and showcased a new video the team produced in early March 2020.



Schools liaison – Our Schools Liaison service continues to keep in touch with schools to support them with enquiries and online applications. We are now offering online careers information sessions via Microsoft Teams to all secondary schools which are open for the children of the NHS and key workers.

Admissions and Advice and Guidance – The Team is working hard on new applications and supporting student progression, as well as planning for enrolment 2020. They have adapted well to the new way of working and have had great feedback.

The HR team is in regular touch with staff and working with managers to ensure relevant communications have been sent out to keep everyone up to date. Take a look at the 'Clap for NHS and keyworkers' [video](#) produced by our HR team who were outside their doorsteps in force providing their thanks.



IT Team – Staff in every area have appreciated the fantastic support provided by our IT team, including the help desk and almost instant response to cries for help in the days after we first moved to remote learning.

The MIS team has been working really well with all of our usual data returns and scrutiny completed.

The Facilities team has been ensuring essential maintenance and security of our buildings and also supporting the constant update and review of the Coronavirus Pandemic, in terms of health, safety and wellbeing.

Finance have been managing the College's business and, working with HR, the first payroll and management accounts have been completed, remotely.

Governance – We have also held a full Board meeting and a Quality and Scrutiny Committee through teleconferencing which were both successfully attended and managed and we have amended our instruments and articles of governance to allow remote access to embrace this model of governance.