



Association of
Scotland's colleges

The Kilmarnock

Edition

KILMARNOCK COLLEGE

April 2009

Leadership Academy strikes gold!

Tourism students work for charity

Bright future hailed for Kilmarnock College

"If it wasn't for The Leadership Academy and the other opportunities the college has given me, I'd probably be at home doing nothing now. It really helped build my confidence and encouraged me to stay on at college and find other opportunities that were right for me."



Leadership Academy strikes gold at recent awards.

Kilmarnock College's Leadership Academy, run in partnership with East Ayrshire Council, received a gold award for innovation at the recent Scotland's Colleges Marketing Awards.

The Leadership Academy offers week-long courses for S2-S4 pupils and has been recognised by HMLe as a 'sector-leading and innovative practice.' Focused on boosting the confidence and developing the leadership skills of young people in Ayrshire, over 400 local young people have already participated in the programme and the college has been inundated with requests for places this year – every East Ayrshire school has signed up for three individual weeks and the college is now being approached by schools in other parts of Ayrshire.

Originally established last academic year in response to the high levels of disengaged young people in East Ayrshire (known as young people who require 'more choices and more chances' or 'MCMC'), The Leadership Academy is playing a key role in the reduction of the number of local young people falling into this category.

One person who has benefited significantly from taking part in The Leadership Academy is Cheryl Blackwood, 17 from Catrine. Cheryl took part in the Academy in early 2008, as part of the Winter Leavers' Programme. She then went on to work as a Youth Engagement Assistant at the College through Project Scotland. Cheryl commented: "If it wasn't for The Leadership Academy and the other opportunities the college has given me, I'd probably be at home doing nothing now. It really helped build my confidence and encouraged me to stay on at college and find other opportunities that were right for me.

I really enjoy working at the college, and particularly enjoy working with a variety of people from different backgrounds and helping the school pupils to build their own confidence. I'm also Vice-Chair of the Behaviour Taskforce, which encourages positive behaviours in the college and I've already seen it make an impact on some students. I'm currently doing the Prince's Trust Youth Steps course, and when I finish it I'm hoping to find work as a youth worker."

Carol Nisbet, More Choices More Chances Manager at Kilmarnock College commented: "We put the student first in everything we do, and make sure we support every individual to achieve his or her personal best. I am certain that the Academy will continue to grow from strength to strength, as it helps young people in East Ayrshire and beyond to fulfil their potential."

There is a real buzz and excitement in the college.

I have had the pleasure of welcoming a number of visitors to the college over the last few months and the common feedback from everyone has been that they feel a buzz and excitement in the college. This is a reflection of the positive experience visitors have when engaging with students and staff.

When we hosted members of the Board of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in November it was Children in Need Day and I think the Board members were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of students and staff to contribute to the wider community by their fund raising efforts. This demonstrated citizenship skills and positive behaviours which I know are being demonstrated throughout the college.

We are creating that buzz by moving forward together on a number of fronts. As a result of the comprehensive self evaluation process all curriculum teams have developed their portfolios for 2009/10 focussing on the needs of the community we serve and building on the analysis of past performance and positive student outcomes. The curriculum delivery plan for 2009/10 is now in place and work will be undertaken to agree staffing and supplies budgets for next year with curriculum managers during April.

All service teams have reviewed their areas and business processes and considered how they might continue to improve the student journey and provide

a very positive experience. This work has been an excellent example of staff being reflective practitioners. There are many suggestions for new ways of working and a determination to break down any remaining barriers between areas. All staff will be consulted on the outcome of the service review after the spring holiday and I look forward to receiving feedback from colleagues on the next steps.

The estates team have been working on plans to improve the facilities available for learning and teaching, social spaces and staff work spaces. The Estates Committee of the Board approved a new estates strategy on 23 February. Work will begin over the next month to address issues raised in our condition survey report which relates to electrical and engineering works as well as a range of refurbishment projects across the college. The most complex project will be the adaptation of the assembly hall into a one-stop-shop for students. This work is scheduled to begin in June and I would ask for support and patience from all students and staff as this project is taken forward.



I am pleased that staff and students have been involved in the design stages of the one-stop-shop and I believe Kilmarnock College has once again led the sector by having student involvement on the panel which interviewed the companies who tendered for the design work. A workshop for staff and students was held on 27 March to review the designs. Drawings and samples of colours and fabrics which may be used in the refurbishment are on view in the reception area for all students, staff and visitors to see and provide feedback.

The estates projects are possible due to the capital allocation we receive from the SFC. For session 2009/10 we have been awarded additional capital funds; this is due to an acceleration of monies which were expected in 2010/11. These funds are ring fenced for estates projects and help support the continuous development of colleges.

Our students continue to be role models and ambassadors for the college. Sport and fitness students represented the college at the first national sporting event for Scotland's Colleges and raised the profile of the college by competing to the highest standards and

demonstrating that the college supports the development of highly skilled, talented and enthusiastic sports men and women.

Students from the Prince's Trust area addressed a national conference and gave their views on what their expectations are of the college and what their experience has been so far. They freely answered questions (which they had not been given in advance) and sang the praises of the college staff who had supported them on their learning journey. Addressing a national conference is intimidating for those of us who have experience in this area but for young people who have faced challenges in learning and life, it must have been very daunting. The confidence with which our students answered questions was evidence of the support and encouragement they have been given at college, which has influenced their self esteem, value base and behaviours.

I hope that you can feel the "buzz" in the college as we move forward together. The pace of change is fast but it is important that we continue the sense of urgency in order to achieve our ambitious goals.

Tourism students work for charity.

Kilmarnock College has become the first education establishment in the UK to partner with ethical travel company, Travel2Give, to give student work placement opportunities.

Twenty Travel & Tourism students are taking part in a year-long placement with the Kilmarnock-based not-for-profit travel company. One of the few such companies in the UK, Travel2Give supports a range of charities including Age Concern, Cash for Kids and Poppy Scotland, by donating their profits without any additional cost to the customer.

The college team has been tasked with developing the company's Sponsorable Adventures Programme, which offers a range of activities such as ballooning and white water rafting to individuals and groups who would like to undertake them in support of their favourite charity.

The students are also spending some of their placement time assisting with fundraising activities for the charities Travel2Give is involved with, most recently assisting at the West Sound Cash for Kids lunch at Ayr Racecourse. Tourism Lecturer Carol Fenton has been responsible for co-ordinating the partnership. She said:

“Offering this year-long placement with Travel2Give has provided a fantastic opportunity for our students. Not only are they gaining practical experience which will help them secure employment when they graduate, but they are also making a very valuable contribution to some worthwhile local causes.”

Bright future hailed for Kilmarnock College.

Des Browne MP has expressed confidence in the new management team in place at Kilmarnock College and their plans for the college's future. The Principal and Chair of Kilmarnock College recently returned from a series of meetings at Westminster, with MP for Kilmarnock and Loudon, Des Browne MP, and Secretary of State for Scotland and Rt Hon. Jim Murphy.

The college's Principal, Heather Dunk and Chair, Stephen Brannagan, updated politicians on progress made since the appointment of Heather Dunk as Principal in October last year, along with plans to progress to a full business case for a new build by the early next year.

Rt Hon. Des Browne commented: “I have been hugely encouraged by the progress that has already been made at Kilmarnock College in the short time since the appointment of Heather Dunk as Principal and Stephen Brannagan as Chair. There has been a shift towards a much more student-centred approach, with the student experience now placed firmly at the heart of every decision made. Working with the Board of Management, Heather and her team are making positive steps towards a very bright future indeed for Kilmarnock College.”



Pictured, from left to right: Des Browne MP, Heather Dunk, Principal of Kilmarnock College, Rt. Hon Jim Murphy, Secretary of State for Scotland, Ian Macpherson, Chair of Scotland's Colleges and Stephen Brannagan, Chair of Kilmarnock College.

The visit was part of a delegation organised by sector agency Scotland's Colleges, to meet with MPs to discuss how the college sector can help tackle the recession, as well as the impact of welfare reform on Scotland's college students and the issue of 'bogus colleges'.

Ayrshire's next top models: Staff at Kilmarnock College produce calendar for cancer.

A group of big-hearted cleaners at Kilmarnock College has raised over £1000 for Ayrshire Cancer Support by producing a cheeky yet glamorous calendar in tribute to their supervisor.

When they heard that Campus Supervisor George McAvoy had been diagnosed with cancer, the cleaners at the college decided that rather than write a card or give flowers they would use their energies to raise money for a worthy cause.

The calendar was produced entirely in-house at Kilmarnock College by the Marketing Department, with college photographer John Connor offering his services for free.

Janie Riddick, General Manager of Ayrshire Cancer Support, said: "We at Ayrshire Cancer Support would like to thank everyone involved in the making of this fabulous calendar. The money raised from the sale of the calendar will enable us to help so many more patients in Ayrshire who are facing difficulties at this time. This donation is all the more personal to myself because George is my brother and I really appreciate all the support he has had from you all."



Sporty students showcase talents in First National Championships.

Forty three students from Kilmarnock College recently took part in the first of Scotland's Colleges Sport National Championships, hosted by Adam Smith College on Wednesday 4 March. The college were victorious in events including volleyball, cross-country running and rugby.

Top picture (from left to right, back row to front row): Rugby team, Gordon Reid (coach) from Ayr, Callum Stewart from Kilmarnock, Liam McGarry from Ayr, Andrew Hamilton from Kilmarnock, Neil Todd from Kilmarnock and Gary Hewison from Kilmarnock. Neil Toner from Troon, Louis Gray from Kilmarnock, Dayle Keen from Irvine, Jarrid Michel from Ayr and Craig Kerr from Tarbolton. (Ages 17 - 21)

Middle picture (from left to right, back row to front row): Winners of the volleyball competition, Adam Moore from Prestwick, Graham Gemmell from Irvine, Jamie Mackay from Prestwick and Mark Gilchrist from Kilmaurs. Roy Blakely from Kilwinning, Nicola Fowler from Dalmellington and Ryan Finlay from Logan. (Ages 16 - 22)

Bottom picture: Ross Good, age 19 from Stewarton and currently studying HND Sports Coaching at Kilmarnock College, overall winner of the cross country event.

