BUCKS UTC

July Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers

The end of the academic year is fast approaching – at last, I hear staff and students say. I am conscious that the College finishes later than some schools and quite simply this reflects the number of assignments and the amount of work in our Key Stage 4 and 16+ Computing and Construction BTEC courses. I am indebted to staff for all their goodwill and support in recent weeks – we know that the students' results will as last year be significantly above national averages and this speaks volumes for the breadth and quality of teaching and learning in our specialist areas. The results also reflect the good humour of our students – I know that every individual's 'sign-off' is a significant personal milestone and their collective commitment to completing their specialist courses to the very best of their ability is a major strength of the College – I wish everyone every possible success in the 'results season', and trust that our Year 11 know of their possible pathways, while for Year 13 I wish every student success at either university or college, or in their first step into full-time employment.

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Key Dates

Thursday 18th August:
Post-16 results available from 09:00. Senior staff will be available for students seeking advice until 16:00.

Friday 19th August:
Senior staff again available to offer students advice, this time from 10:00 - 16:00.

Thursday 25th August:
Year 11 results available from 10:00. Senior staff will be available for students seeking advice re their progression until 16:00.

Friday 26th August:
Senior staff again available to offer Year 11 results advice from 09:00 - 16:00.

Tuesday 30th August - Friday 2nd September:
Senior staff available to discuss Sixth-Form options from 09:00 - 16:00. Students are welcome to call our reception line on 01296 388459 to arrange a 1:1 interview on any of these days.

Monday 5th September:
The new academic year begins, with students on site from 09:00.

There is much to report on as the College has been very busy in recent weeks. Therefore, I will summarise key parts of our work and progress in a number of short sections:

PROGRESS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

The College is indebted to Sarah Newall for her leadership of our Post-Ofsted Action Plan, which is fundamental to raising the standards of achievement of all our students. Key actions have included:

- An intensive training programme led by our partner school St Clement Danes, to enhance our understanding of teaching and learning;

- Particular focuses have included subjects within our core curriculum including English, History, Spanish and Business Studies, as well as our management of student's examination data;

- A range of new policies and practices have been reviewed with staff including literacy, numeracy, our quality assurance systems, and marking policy;

- Staff have been observing teaching and learning in a range of schools, to enhance our collective practices in the classroom.

All the above will inform our training week with staff commencing 18th July as well as our Inset Days in 2016-17. There is a lot of support and planning to enhance the learning and progress of our students next year, and I am grateful to all staff for their preparedness to go the extra mile as we work together on our action plan.

TIMES OF THE COLLEGE DAY, 2016-17

We have been reviewing the organisation of the College day and from the start of the new academic year the following changes will apply:

- Teaching will end at 16:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and at 15:00 on Wednesdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays we have Professional Development Programme for all staff, to continue our work to enhance students' learning;

- 'Registration' will move from the start of the day to the start of the afternoon – so it is important that students are on site and in first lesson for **08:40** every day;

- Lessons will each be fifty minutes. This is so we can facilitate the pace of learning in each lesson. It also means we have more 'lessons' in the timetable i.e. the amount of teaching time is **not** affected.

PARENTS' EVENING – WEDNESDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER

Can I give very early notice of the above, namely an Evening Meeting to which ALL parents are invited at 19:00 on Wednesday 7th September, to look at how in addition to all the work we are undertaking with teaching staff, we are also intending to support further each student's learning and progress next year.

We are also working with a nationally acclaimed company – Elevate – who in the past decade have supported many thousands of students in improving their attention span using a series of practical skills, techniques and strategies. A series of workshops will follow the launch evening – I do hope that you can join us!

We will be sending individual invitations out to all parents nearer the time, however, if you would like to register your attendance in advance, please call reception on 01296 388459.

National Recognition

The work of Bucks UTC is being recognised on the wider public stage in two respects:

SARAH NEWALL INVITED TO JOIN OFQUAL WORKING PARTY

Parents and students will know of Sarah's outstanding knowledge of and contribution to the College's development, and I trust everyone is delighted that this is being recognised in her invitation to join the Ofqual Working Group set up to review the standards within Level II/III Construction Courses throughout the country – it truly is an honour for Sarah and the College.
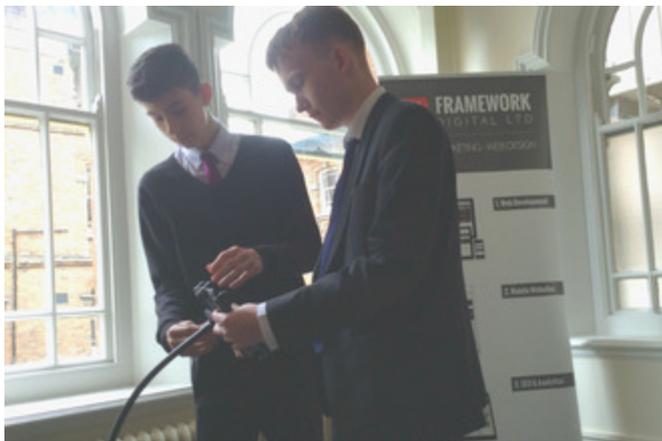
UTC CONFERENCE

Sarah has also been responsible for the implementation of our Post-Ofsted Action Plan in conjunction with St Clement Danes School. The very real progress which will hopefully be apparent in this summer's results is receiving national attention and the College has been invited to lead a key workshop at this year's UTC Annual Conference on their work – we are heading in the right direction!

Local Recognition

As usual our students have been engaged in community and employer-led projects that have been welcomed by the public and supporters of our UTC

COMPUTING STUDENTS HELP PATIENTS RECEIVE REMOTE MEDICAL CARE

Bucks UTC Computing students Will Mathew and Charlie Steer have piloted tele-health care facilities at South Bucks Hospice to help patients receive aspects of their medical care remotely.

The South Bucks Hospice team was looking for a way to use video communication technology to improve the services they could offer their patients and wanted to set up a pilot project. Digital marketing company, Framework Digital, one of Bucks UTC's partners approached Bucks UTC with this 'real' project opportunity. Students explored video conferencing technology, found an appropriate solution and enabled this onto tablets, so that patients could receive medical advice remotely.'

Jo Woolf, CEO at South Bucks Hospice, commented: 'It is great to have William and Charlie working with us. They exceeded all our expectations, taking the initiative and executing the idea really well. Being able to offer our patients services like physiotherapy and access to medical professionals via a video call is hugely helpful on both sides, speeding up access and supporting independent living.'

SIXTH-FORM STUDENTS BUILD AN ULTRASONIC ROBOT TO EDUCATE YOUNGSTERS AT INTEL'S CODERDOJO

Bucks UTC Sixth-Form Computing students Joshua Cooper, Kieran McClean, Rory Hillyer, Liam Donnelly and Mohammed Khan are building a small robot with ultrasonic sensors to educate and inspire kids with a passion for IT at a local, technology-led club known as CoderDojo.

CoderDojo is a volunteer-led, community-based programming club for young people, created by Intel. Tech-enthusiasts between 7-17 years of age can learn how to code, develop websites, apps, programmes and games, and explore technology in an informal and creative environment.

To compliment CoderDojo's project portfolio, our students have been building onto a motor and connecting it with an ultrasonic sensor (similar to how a bat detects its surroundings) to drive around Intel's Headquarters and transmit visuals via pulses of sound, to create a map of the building's interior.

Purposely made for the 10-14 year old members of this club, the project aims to educate, excite and open minds about the fantastic range of applications computing can be used for.

To keep updated with the amazing things our students and staff get up to, be sure to check out the news section of our website!

Key Dates 2016-17

Autumn Term 2016

Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd September - Inset Days for staff.

Monday 5th September - Start of the college year, students on site from 09:00.

Wednesday 7th September - Evening Meeting for all parents at 19:00 - Helping Our Students' Learning.

Thursday 6th October - Open Evening for prospective Year 10 and 12 students (for September 2017 entry), 16:00 - 19:00.

Friday 21st October - College finishes for Half-Term at 15:00.

WC Monday 24th October - Half-Term.

Monday 31st October Staff Inset-Day. College is closed to all students.

Tuesday 1st November - College reopens at the usual time.

Thursday 3rd November - Year 10 Parents and Students Consultation Evening, 16:00 - 19:00.

WC Monday 5th December - Year 11/GCSE Resit Mock Examination Week.

WC Monday 12th December - Christmas Project Week (more details to follow).

Monday 19th December - Progress Reports issued to all students.

Tuesday 20th December - Term ends at 13:15.

Wednesday 21st December - Tuesday 3rd January - College closed for Christmas.

Spring Term 2017

Wednesday 4th January - Staff Inset-Day. College closed to all students.

Thursday 5th January - College reopens at the usual time.

Thursday 12th January - Year 11 Parents and Students Consultation Evening 16:00 - 19:00.

Thursday 19th January - Year 12 and 13 Parents and Students Consultation Evening 16:00 - 19:00.

Thursday 31st January - Open Evening for prospective Year 10 and 12 students (for September 2017 entry), 16:00 - 19:00.

Friday 10th February - College finishes for Half-Term at 15:00.

WC Monday 13th February - Half-Term.

Monday 20th February - Staff Inset-Day. College closed to all students.

Tuesday 21st February - College reopens at the usual time.

WC Monday 27th February - Community Project Week (more details to follow).

Thursday 2nd March - Open Evening for prospective Year 10 and 12 students (for September 2017 entry) 16:00 - 19:00.

Saturday 4th March - Open Morning for prospective Year 10 and 12 students (for September 2017 entry), 10:00 - 13:00.

Thursday 30th March - Progress Reports issued to all students.

Friday 31st March - Term ends at 13:15.

WC Mondays 3rd and 10th April - College closed for Easter.

Monday 17th April - Bank Holiday. College is closed to all students.

Summer Term 2017

Tuesday 18th April - College reopens at the usual time.

Monday 1st May - Bank Holiday. College is closed to all students.

Saturday 6th May - Open Morning for prospective Year 10 and 12 students (for September 2017 entry), 10:00 - 13:00.

Monday 8th May - GCSE/A-Level examinations begin.

Friday 26th May - College finishes for Half-Term at 15:00.

WC Monday 29th May - Half-Term.

Monday 5th June - College reopens at the usual time.

WC Monday 19th June - Year 10 Examination Week.

Thursday 29th June - Propective Year 12 (for September 2017) keeping-in-touch/Induction Day.

WC Monday 10th July - Enterprise Week (more details to follow).

Wednesday 12th July - Annual Awards Evening.

Friday 14th July - College year ends at 13:15.

Thursday 17th August - 16+/Level 3 Results Day.

To conclude, we finish the academic year of 2015-16 in good heart for there is a positive feel of the College moving forward and becoming stronger. Most of all I am indebted to the staff for their exemplary professionalism as it is at the heart of the College's development. I also know that one of our challenges in 2016-17 is to enhance key aspects of the students' experiences in the College, for their perceptions are the life-blood of the College's future. More of this in 2016-17, but in the meantime can I wish every student success in the months ahead and thank everyone for their goodwill in my first term in the College.

2016-17 will be busy, but it will also be exciting as we work together to enhance the reputation of our UTC.

May the coming summer give every family the opportunity to recharge their batteries and to have quality time together!

Yours sincerely,