

Widening Participation One small step...



This publication has been designed to promote the work of the Widening Participation team here at the University of Worcester, to highlight the array of activities that involve current students, school pupils, voluntary groups, adult learners – in short, that the university is open to all of the local community, it's not just the reserve of students.



Sports Science Summer School

The worst weather for more than 100 years didn't stop the University of Worcester's annual Sports Science Summer School from going ahead full swing for the fourth year running.

Thirty four 16 and 17 year olds from Herefordshire, Worcestershire and beyond descended on the University and were given a unique insight into student life. All of the participants were from families with no background of higher education.

Living on campus for a week the budding coaches, personal trainers, lifestyle advisers and sportsmen and women were introduced to the latest in science, technology, and nutritional advice from the University's lecturers.

It wasn't all work though, as any university student will testify. There were plenty of social activities on offer from windsurfing and canoeing to archery. The whole summer school package is carefully designed to encourage talented students to raise their aspirations and consider higher education for their own future.

For info on our Sports Science Summer School 2008 please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Julie



So what did the participants make of the experience?

“ I wasn't sure if I was going to attend university but this week has changed my mind and I'm very interested in attending Worcester uni. ”

“ I gained an insight into uni life, I learnt a lot about myself; brought out of my comfort zone. ”

“ I got stomach ache from laughing too hard! ”

Perdiswell Playscheme enjoys Mini University Challenge

Over 240 children had a jam packed afternoon of activities as part of the Perdiswell Young People's Leisure Club summer playscheme. The children, aged 8-12, were introduced to a wide range of activities including: circus skills by Millennium Volunteers, drumming workshops, a scrapheap challenge organised by SETPOINT, and an inflatable planetarium! The aim of the event was to provide an informal learning experience and to demystify the university campus. When talking to BBC Hereford and Worcester, a number of the children initially thought that a university would be boring, large, and scary. However, having now visited the campus they found it fun and exciting.

Volunteers' Week Summer Concert

National Volunteers' Week runs annually from 1st – 7th June, and is an opportunity to recruit more volunteers, and celebrate the valuable work that volunteers do. Working in conjunction with the Worcester Volunteer Centre, we held a celebration concert on June 6th. It featured fantastic performances from local charity Worcester Snoezelen, folk group Horizon Lights, guitarist Alix Walls and the first public performance from St Richard's Hospice Singers. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and relaxing evening and we would like to extend our thanks to all those who performed and supported the event. For those of you who missed this superb show, you have another opportunity to see and hear Snoezelen volunteers, staff and clients at their Christmas Concert on 18th November 2007, taking place at the University.





Championing Excellence

department for
children, schools and families



The University of Worcester is a partner in a successful bid to create the West Midlands Excellence Hub, part of a network of regional Hubs that aim to provide young gifted and talented people with the stimulation they need to help them meet their full potential.

YG&T (Young Gifted and Talented), is a national programme run by the CFBT Education Trust, which aims to support schools, colleges, parents and learners alike, providing access to an extensive range of activities, information, and support. The nine regional Excellence Hubs form part of this YG&T programme. Led by higher education institutions, each hub focuses on the provision of a diverse range of outreach activities for gifted and talented learners wanting a greater challenge. The activities can include:

> 'Experts in Action' Lectures – These enable learners to work alongside an expert in their field, and tend to focus on subjects not covered within the standard curriculum.

> Masterclasses - These sessions give learners the chance to sample higher level study in a wide range of A-level subjects. They give students direct experience of higher education,

and enable them to work with both lecturers and current undergraduates, as well as access the latest teaching and learning resources.

> Interactive Subject Days – Generally containing a high level of interaction and hands on activity, these events provide advanced level opportunities for G&T learners to stretch themselves outside of a traditional classroom environment.

> Business Development Days – G&T learners with an interest in business or entrepreneurial endeavour can access a range of events focussed on the world of business. These sessions will often incorporate experts from relevant fields, as well as access to university enterprise facilities.

> Summer Schools – In the future there will be scope to include both residential and non-residential activities and subject-focussed events lasting several days.

The Excellence Hub has a strong focus on widening participation, with places available to those who previously may not have considered higher education to be a realistic option.

The University's G&T activities will be rolled out by the Widening Participation team.

Currently we have planned:

- ❖ Experts in Action lectures in media and journalism
- ❖ Masterclasses in media and journalism
- ❖ Business Development Days
- ❖ Interactive Subject Days in both Theatre Studies & Performing Arts, and Creative Arts & Design

Further details of these events, and many other opportunities, are available through the YG&T Portal (under development at time of going to press), and through the University's widening participation website: www.worc.ac.uk/wp.

Will



Partnership Focus

The WP team would not be able to deliver its activities without the support from colleagues within the university and external organisations. In order to recognise these valuable partnerships, each issue of Skyline will feature an article on one of our partners.

The Attic

The Attic's primary focus is visual arts work for and with children and young people. The company comprises theatre, film, dance, music and related visual arts. It was created in 2005 by University staff as part of Worcester Children's Storytelling Festival. A number of projects have already taken place in schools and other community venues. A recent project based at St Clements C of E Primary School consisted of a series of dance workshops on the theme of relationships. Students and staff from the

University encouraged the children to look at the nature of relationships with friends and family; class mates and teachers. Their final dance was taken from creative work that the dancers explored during the workshops, looking at gestures and reactions. The workshops themselves included warm ups, encouraging exercise and fun, as well as creative tasks to encourage children to communicate and co-operate with group members and to work independently, developing their imagination and creative skills.



Information, Advice and Guidance

As the Aimhigher Impartial Higher Education Guidance Officer it is part of my role to support guidance practitioners working with young people in schools, colleges and training providers across both Herefordshire and Worcestershire. I will be working closely with partner organisations responsible for the delivery of advice and guidance.

I maintain and manage the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Aimhigher guidance practitioners JISCmail, a distribution list that keeps you up to date with current issues regarding HE advice and guidance. It is also a way of discussing issues, sharing ideas and announcing events. To subscribe, simply go to www.jiscmail.ac.uk and use the 'find lists' – 'by list name' search facility. Type in 'aimhigher-hw' and click 'go'. From the aimhigher-hw homepage follow the link 'join or leave the list.' Fill in your email address and name and set subscription options. Click on the join button. Once you have been added to the list you will automatically receive messages sent to the list by other members. When you reply it will be sent to the whole list.

I will be offering a training programme for IAG staff working in schools, colleges and Connexions and will be sending out a training needs questionnaire. If you are interested and would like to be included in the distribution list then please get in touch. Possible training sessions could include:

- HE Finance
- UCAS Apply
- Widening participation - different routes into HE – vocational pathways
- Writing effective Personal Statements
- Reference writing
- Graduate labour market and employment trends

Aimhigher...

Updated Publications

A new version of the leaflet 'Getting into Higher education... what to do if things go wrong' has been produced. It is aimed at young people who have completed their A-level/level 3 qualifications and gives the various options available when their results are not what they were expecting. This leaflet is also useful for HE applicants once they have applied, in case they don't get any offers, as it takes them through the UCAS Extra process. The leaflet can also be downloaded from www.aimhigherwm.org

The leaflet 'Which A-levels' has also been updated and this should be available for the start of the autumn term. If you would like copies of this publication please email me with your request.

Hilary



Providing support and inspiration to social enterprises

Social Enterprise is one of the many hot topics with central government at present, as they believe such organisations can fulfil a number of key priorities including: creating active citizens, delivering public services, regenerating neighbourhoods, improving productivity and more. With so much for organisations to achieve, the Widening Participation team and Business Partnerships Office have joined up with Partners for Social Enterprise to offer support and advice to social enterprises in the two counties.

In May 2007 over 50 people attended a range of presentations and workshops at the Social Enterprise Funding and Finance Fair. The aim of the event was to encourage organisations to think beyond grant funding and help secure a more sustainable future. Ideas on offer included loan finance, trading options, and more creative approaches, such as collaboration and private sector investment. Jennifer Springer from Partners for Social Enterprise: "This event was just the first step in fostering a vibrant social economy in the local area and we are thrilled that it was such a success. There is a real buzz around social enterprise". Further events will take place over the coming months – if you are involved with a social enterprise please let me know your requirements for training and support.

Catherine

Definitions and Jargon Buster

- Aimhigher – A government funded programme for England that aims to increase the number of people studying higher education, and attract individuals that are currently under-represented.
- Excellence Hub – Higher education institutions have joined up to form regional hubs to provide a wide variety of outreach events for gifted and talented learners.
- Foundation degree – A vocational HE qualification that combines academic study with practical experience. It is roughly equivalent to the first two years of an honours degree.
- Healthcare CARD – This regional project is designed to help learners on healthcare related vocational programmes in participating FE colleges. A number of activities are offered to CARD participants, in order that they can make informed choices about their routes to a successful career.
- Higher Education (HE) - HE courses are those set at a higher level of difficulty than A-levels, level 3 NVQs, Access courses and other level 3 courses. HE programmes can be studied at universities, HE colleges and some Further Education (FE) colleges.
- Higher Education Institution (HEI) – An organisation that offers HE courses. This could be a university, FE college, or the Open University.
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). This body distributes government money to universities in England.
- Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) – support for learners covering topics such as: types of qualification and progression routes.
- Lifelong Learning Network – A HEFCE funded scheme to encourage work based learners into and through higher education.
- Local Area Agreement (LAA) – Launched in 2005, a set of agreements are made between central and local government. Their aim is to achieve local solutions that meet local needs, while also contributing to national priorities and the achievement of standards set by central government.
- SETPOINT – Operating across Herefordshire and Worcestershire, they are a member of SETNET, a national charity that promotes awareness of science, engineering, technology and maths.
- Social Enterprise – A business with social objectives, whose surpluses are reinvested for the benefit of the community. Well known examples include: Jamie Oliver's Fifteen Foundation, the Eden Project, and Big Issue.
- Third sector - non-governmental organisations which principally reinvest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives. It includes voluntary and community organisations, charities, faith groups, social enterprises, and cooperatives.
- Widening Participation – Aims to improve opportunities for a broader range of students, making HE a real possibility for those not well represented.

We hope that you found this first issue informative and gave you a flavour of the variety of work that is undertaken by the Widening Participation team. When you have finished reading the newsletter, please spread the Widening Participation word amongst colleagues and partners.

The Team

If you would like further information on any aspect of our work, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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