



**South  
Lanarkshire  
College**  

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East Kilbride

FOR PUBLISHING

**REPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Marketing, Recruitment and International Activity**

**May 2020**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This report updates the Development Committee on marketing activities that have taken place since the last report in February 2020.

## **2 SUMMARY**

**2.1** Update on events, media, promotion, website and publications

**2.2** Recruitment

**2.3** Schools activity

**2.4** International activity

## **3 DETAIL FROM SUMMARY**

### **3.1 EVENTS**

Due to the current climate, the College has taken the difficult decision to cancel the Celebration Dinner, Graduation Ceremonies and Construction Awards planned for September and October this year. This is not yet public knowledge - communications are being prepared to advise students and stakeholders of this decision. In recognition of the importance of celebrating student success, the College Leadership Team is considering all available options and initial consideration is being given to virtual celebrations; joint video speeches from the Chair and Principal, etc.; the issuing of certificates and student prizes; announcements on social media platforms and coverage in the local press. Curriculum areas will also seek to hold virtual celebrations for their student groups.

The Graduation Ceremonies planned for October 2020 have now been re-scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Separately, we are revisiting the way a number of internal events will take place in the College. Our annual Care for a Cuppa event usually takes place during Carers Week on 8 June 2020, however we will move this to a virtual event with social media messaging and tailored contact with our student carers. Going forward we will continue to look into innovative ways to engage and include our students during in-house events such as Freshers, Health and Wellbeing Week, etc."

### **3.2 UPDATE ON MEDIA, WEBSITE AND PUBLICATIONS**

Due to the pandemic and lockdown situation the College has had to transition quickly to operate on a fully virtual basis. It has therefore been a key priority for the Marketing Team to reconsider its current strategy to have a greater online digital presence. There have also been significant increases in the level of messaging going out on all our digital platforms to staff, students, prospective applicants, stakeholders and the wider college community. This has led to a significant increase in overall digital activity for the period March to May.

To help support the marketing function, and to elevate SLCs digital marketing activity, the College have recruited the services of a Public Relations and Marketing Consultant for the period May to August. Support provided will consist of:

- Support/guiding on social media content targeting across Facebook/Instagram;
- Developing the SLC LinkedIn page, training staff on LinkedIn;
- Create news items and optimising all relevant news items for website search;
- Indexing all news items on Google Search Console;
- Developing Google My Business for SLC;

- Awareness of news within the education sector and repurposing that for content and reach on behalf of SLC;
- Training on digital social media for the College Leadership Team.

### Media Plan

Our media plan has been updated and now reflects an increase in digital activity (see Appendix One). The plan continues to comprise of a range of multi-channel, online and offline media.

### Outdoor

The majority of outdoor advertising was scheduled for May, June, July and August 2020. Due to safety regulations put in place by the Scottish Government following the COVID-19 outbreak, we have delayed the majority of our billboard and railway station campaigns. Outdoor media is now set for installation in late June/early July to coincide with an ease in lockdown restrictions. A number of traditional billboards are scheduled for display in East Kilbride and the surrounding area including Hamilton. Additionally, we have optioned several digital displays in the local shopping centre and supermarkets, (selected based on students' and applicants' geographical provenance). The billboard designs display a clear call to action to 'Apply Now for Courses starting from August' and additionally, any new billboards will provide information regarding upcoming Virtual Information Events (see Appendix Two).

### Digital and Social

Digital and social media activity have grown significantly during the period March through to May. Social media analytics reporting show increases in the number of posts, engagement per post, and page likes, across all the College's social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (see Appendix Three). Additionally, the College Twitter account show a significant increase in activity with increased postings and tagging partner organisations. The College's dormant LinkedIn page has been reactivated with development work taking place to increase and improve engagement levels.

- All channel impressions (no. of eyes seeing posts from SLC across all channels) 2,818,786 (increase of 48.8%);
- All channel engagements (taken an action - liked, shared, commented) 128,670 (increase of 23.5%);
- All channel link clicks (physically clicked on link to learn more or apply via link) 13,518 (increase of 86.7%);
- Follower growth across all channels has increased to 10,303 (increase of 58%);
- Total net follower growth across all channels 1,685 (increase of 49.5%)
- Biggest Fan growth is Facebook (751), Instagram (585), Twitter (147) and LinkedIn (202)

Engagement (most important metric as it proves messaging is resonating): 128,670 across all channels, increase of 23.5%:

- Twitter Engagements 7,499 (increase of 22%)
- Facebook Engagements 114,425 (increase of 13.8%)
- Instagram Engagements 5,982 (increase of 341%)
- LinkedIn Engagements 814 (percentage increase not available as analytics only brought in LinkedIn monitoring in the last few months)

### Virtual Information Events

In May 2020, we held a series of Virtual Information Events. The three College faculties were split into three separate events, over three consecutive days. Potential applicants were encouraged to register to attend the event via the College website. The Event was promoted

via the College radio campaign on Clyde one and through promoted and scheduled posts on Social Media. Twitter was a wide source of advertising with many local schools and businesses retweeting the events to their followers. Registration for events were as follows:

- Business 20 registrations
- Care 44 registrations
- Construction 10 registrations

### **Radio**

The contract with Clyde One continues until July 2020 and will be reviewed at the beginning of June. Promotional tags have been updated to reflect the Apply Now for courses starting FROM August message and have also been changed to relay the Virtual Information Event messages. The Clyde One tags now include the College website address and it is used to direct listeners to apply online (see Appendix Four).

### **College Website**

In the period 1 February to 26 May 2020, the website homepage had 102,464 views (1 December 2019 to 31 January 2020 39,727 views) with 'Courses- apply now' (15,406 views), 'Course finder' (10,998 views) and 'Course list a-z' (5,043 views) being the most popular course-related pages.

The page builder plug in, Elementor, has been installed to our website to help improve the overall design of our website. This allows the Marketing team to edit and design web pages visually, without the use of code. The plug in provides total customisation over design whilst following our brand guidelines. Design templates have been created to ensure consistency in style throughout future web pages (see Appendix Five).

Yoast SEO premium plug in has been installed to our website in May to help improve the number of organic site visitors from Google and Bing, attract more visitors from social media and increase our readers' engagement. The plug in offers the Marketing team tips on elements of the page to change (e.g, how to edit the written content and optimise the text) to increase the chances of the page being found online via search engine.

### **Publications**

The Annual Report was published in March 2020 as an A2 cross folding to A4/A5 document, on sustainably produced paper. The report has been published digitally on our website; been distributed to staff; and has been sent digitally to all our external stakeholders. Students and stakeholders can download the digital version from our website.

A number of student-focussed publications including the Student Newsletter and the new online and telephone Student Counselling Service were produced. These were published on our website and promoted on our social media platforms. Information about courses is primarily digital based at present, with prospective student being directed to our web-based course information as an alternative to our printed course information guides.

A range of information has been published on the College website and promoted via our social media platforms to support the College's response to the COVID 19 pandemic. These include:

- Community Support Information which details information for key support services and promoting mental health and wellbeing advice.
- Gender Based Violence Support which provides details of support available to vulnerable individuals.

Information has been published for staff and distributed via email (see Appendix Six):

- Staff Newsletter
- Staff Health & Wellbeing Guide
- Staff Wellbeing and Working from Home Guidance

### 3.3 RECRUITMENT

In comparison to the same period last year, as at the 27 May 2020, current recruitment figures are positive given the current challenging position. The number of FT and PT applications received fluctuates on a weekly basis but overall is down on the same point last year. This is a similar picture at other colleges, and the sector on a whole have seen applications drop by around 8-10%.

- All applications (FT and PT): 4,435 (-5.72% on last year)
- FT applications: 3769 (-5.48% on last year)
- PT applications: 666 (-7.05% on last year)

On a positive note, the number of offers issued has significantly increased in comparison to the same point last year. This is a real testament to the staff who have successfully transitioned to operating the admissions process on a fully virtual basis. Applications continue to be processed as normal; interviews are taking place online or over the telephone; and offers issued electronically.

- All offers (FT and PT): 2,469 (+19.14% on last year)
- Full-time offers (unconditional and conditional): 2,114 (13.51% on last year)
- Part-time offers (unconditional and conditional): 355 (68.54% on last year)

### 3.4 SENIOR PHASE AND SCHOOLS ACTIVITY

#### 3.4.1 SOUTH LANARKSHIRE SCHOOLS

The College continues to work very productively and positively with South Lanarkshire Council to develop and improve our Senior Phase options for young people. Young people from across South Lanarkshire attend the College across the four pathway options available to them:

- Pathway 1 senior phase core programme Gradu8**
- Pathway 2 senior phase independent options**
- Pathway 3 senior phase winter leavers**
- Pathway 4 senior phase Foundation Apprenticeships**

The College's Senior Phase and Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) portfolio has been developed to offer different solutions for different pupil needs and, building on the successes of previous years, the FA portfolio has been expanded to deliver five options: Accountancy (one-year and two-year options); Business Skills (one-year and two-year options); Social Services and Healthcare (one-year and two-year options); Social Services Children and Young People (one-year and two-year options); and Creative and Digital Media (one-year and two-year options). 171 FA applications have been received from South Lanarkshire pupils to-date.

Due to the current situation the planned FA welcome events due to be held in College in early June have been cancelled. Discussions are taking place to organise an online event where pupils on FA programmes can meet their Lecturers and ask questions about the course.

## **GRADU8**

In April 2020, 273 South Lanarkshire pupils received a Gradu8 qualification from the College across a range of disciplines including: Early Education and Childcare; Construction; Beauty Therapy; Make-up Artistry; Hairdressing; Mental Health and Wellbeing and Hospitality. South Lanarkshire Council have changed the format of the Gradu8 programme for 2020/21 session. The courses will now be offered on a full day programme rather than half a day. Prospective pupils are currently being assessed by South Lanarkshire Council. The College will welcome 256 South Lanarkshire school pupils on the Monday programmes and a further 246 pupils on the Friday programme.

### **3.4.2 EAST RENFREWSHIRE SCHOOLS**

The College has worked effectively with East Renfrewshire Council to deliver Senior Phase options for East Renfrewshire schools and is now represented at the East Renfrewshire Council Vocational Partnership Group meetings which take place on a quarterly basis. South Lanarkshire College Senior Phase options have been included for the second year in a row in East Renfrewshire schools' options for the 2020/21 academic session, allowing East Renfrewshire young people in S4-6 college-based options across all three of the Faculties. The course offering for East Renfrewshire schools has been developed based on the requirements set out by the Council.

#### **East Renfrewshire Pupil applicant numbers year on year**

- 2019/20 50 pupils
- 2020/21 53 pupils (applications will continue until September 2020)

### **3.4.3 SCHOOLS EVENTS**

The College was represented at 41 schools' careers events by members of staff from the marketing team between August 2019 and March 2020, compared to 33 in the same period last year. In addition to this, marketing and curriculum staff have engaged in a number of visits to schools to deliver presentations and talks to class groups across South Lanarkshire, East Renfrewshire and Glasgow (Holyrood Secondary, Govanhill, for example)

## **3.5 INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY**

### **3.5.1 TIER 4 AND NON-EEA ACTIVITY**

There is currently one UKVI Tier 4 student enrolled on HND Construction Management. Immediately prior to the lockdown period the student returned safely home to China. They continue to engage with their learning and teaching on a remote basis and are progressing well in the course.

To date, in the current recruitment phase, the College has issued one offer of place to a Non-Tier 4 student. They are due to commence studies in the new academic year. To date, there have been no UKVI Tier 4 offers made. It is anticipated there will be no, or very limited, Tier 4 activity in the 2020-21 AY. This is due to the pandemic, lockdown restrictions and concerns around international travel. The College continue to engage fully, with and, receive regular guidance updates, from the Home Office: UK Visas and Immigration. The College's Tier 4 Sponsor Status will continue to be maintained.

### **3.5.2 ERASMUS+**

The 2018/19 grant allocations for Erasmus+ activity was €43,921, to fund staff mobility for training and student mobility for study and training. Planned mobilities for four staff members and two students in March 2020 to Cologne, Germany was postponed due to the pandemic and international travel restrictions. The funds of the 2018-19 grant allocation will now be returned in full to the UK National Agency and a final report submitted.

The College successfully secured a grant allocation for 2019-20 Erasmus+ activity of €26,125. Advice from the UK National Agency regarding future activity is that colleges should continue to plan for future mobility for staff and student study and training. As such, the College will submit a draft budget report to the UK National Agency for potential activity that may take place in 2020-21. A final decision with regards to staff and student mobility this academic session will be made by the College in due course. The health, wellbeing and safety of staff and students continue to be a top priority, and as such, a decision may be taken to suspend any unnecessary international travel in 2020-21

In line with UK National Agency guidance the College have registered a bid for Erasmus+ grants in February 2020 under the 2020-21 call for funding.

## **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that members note:

- 4.1 The update on events media, promotion, website and publications
- 4.2 The information about recruitment
- 4.3 Schools activity update
- 4.4 The information about international activity.

Rose Harkness, Head of Student Services  
May 2020