Government Minister immerses herself in NESCOT

Staff and students were delighted to host Baroness **Jacqui Smith**, the Department for Education's Minister of State for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education on her visit to **Nescot** (North East Surrey College of Technology) in **Ewell Epsom** on Tuesday, 3 September.

Nescot Principal and CEO, **Julie Kapsalis** and **Chris Muller**, Chair of Governors, welcomed the Minister and were proud to showcase the college's state-of-the-art facilities, courses, study programmes and skills provision. The Minister had a tour of the Skills Park that included meeting students, apprentices, staff and the college's employer partners.

Upon arrival, the Minister met Creative Media student, Charlie who won gold at WorldSkills UK 2023, the college's new alpacas, Dolly and Florence (from the on-site farm) and Rhubarb, the assistance dog.

The Minister was introduced to students studying on Nescot's new courses in Construction Skills for Highway Maintenance delivered in partnership with leading highway maintenance contractor, Ringway. She observed demonstrations from students who were learning to lay concrete slabs and drive virtual diggers.

Supporting the Government's ambition to grow apprenticeships, the Minister met apprentices from the construction industry, from Ridgeback, Premier Heating and Watkins Cole. She heard how Nescot has supported many of the students through progression pathways and finding employers. She was particularly interested to hear how Nescot is working to recruit more women into the construction trades through role models and working with employers including Wates.

The Minister was shown the college's new state-of-the-art immersive learning spaces with virtual reality driving simulators and a variety of artificial intelligence tools offering students an innovative learning experience. The Minister also met Pepper, the humanoid and programmable robot from The Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology (IoT) at Nescot. The IoT offers specialist courses and apprenticeships available in digital technologies to equip learners with the relevant skills in an increasingly tech reliant world.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO along with Nescot's senior leaders had the opportunity to speak to the Minister about some of the college's challenges and successes. She said, "We are thrilled and honoured that the Minister chose to visit Nescot at the start of the academic year. The FE sector plays a critical role in not just the training and education of young people and adults, but it is at the forefront of enabling social mobility and meeting the local skills and employment needs."

Essential to Nescot's success are the college's relationships with businesses and the community. Ringway, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Surrey Chambers and Wates had the opportunity to meet with the Minister to talk about their skills needs and work with the college.

Lewis Bridgman, Service Director, Ringway said,"The collaboration between Ringway and Nescot is a shining example of how local partnerships can foster economic growth and community development in Surrey. By investing in the next generation of engineers, the community is setting a strong foundation for long-term prosperity within the delivery of the Surrey Highways service. This approach not only benefits current residents but also ensures that the future workforce is well-equipped to maintain and enhance the region's infrastructure, contributing to a robust and sustainable economy."

Julie added, "On behalf of all our staff and students, I thank the Minister for taking the time out of her busy schedule to visit us. We hope our wonderful staff and students (and animals) have left a lasting impression. I would also like to thank our employer partners for their ongoing support and collaboration."

The visit concluded with plastering student CJ presenting the Minister with a sculpture of a dog made by her department.

 $Image: Baroness\ Jacqui\ Smith,\ the\ Department\ for\ Education's\ Minister\ of\ State\ for\ Skills\ road-testing\ the\ vehicle\ simulator\ in\ Nescot's\ new\ immersive\ learning\ space.$

Ewell Teachers who go further awarded

The Creative Media Teaching Team at Nescot college in Ewell, Surrey, has been recognised with a Silver Award for **Further Education Team of the Year** in the Pearson National Teaching Awards. Now in the running for the coveted Gold Award, the team was selected from thousands of Pearson award nominees due to its inspirational approach. The tutors not only teach students skills for a career working in the media, but also shape young lives by partnering with charities and weaving issues like inclusion, mental health and awareness raising into their projects.

Recognising a lack of work experience opportunities for students, the Creative Media Teaching Team has partnered with charities to create bespoke projects. This provides students with hands on experience and increases the reach and impact of the charities involved. The team have initiated projects on Black History with The Black Curriculum, on suicide in young men with Olly's Future and on healthy relationships with Everyone's Invited. Students have developed videos on poems about race, have created animated films on mental health awareness and have produced video stills about toxic masculinity. The charities involved use these resources across social media and within education programmes to boost awareness and make a 'real life' difference.

Julie Kapsalis, CEO and Principal at Nescot said "I'm so proud of the Media Teaching Team, who consistently produce exciting, challenging, and impactful projects. They've been creative about getting Nescot students work experience and have worked hard to embed and champion inclusion in their work. Those on the course are offered real world, credible experience which will help them when they move into the workplace. The team are also moulding young people who understand their community, have empathy, speak up and feel heard. I hope they'll clinch the Gold Award later this year – it would be so well deserved."

This isn't the first award the team has received. They have an enviable tally of success at the World Skills Awards over the last decade - 5 Gold (including 2023), 2 Silver and 2 Bronze awards - a credit to their commitment, hard work, and dedication to their students.

The National Teaching Award announcement comes as students, schools and colleges across the UK are today paying tribute to all those who work in education to mark National Thank a Teacher Day, which celebrates the whole education community and shines a light on the exceptional impact they have on shaping young lives.

Sharon Hague, Managing Director of School Assessment & Qualifications at Pearson UK, said

"We're delighted to recognise this year's Silver Award winners on their outstanding achievements. The contributions they make and the impact they have on young people's lives every day is truly exceptional. We're extremely proud to support the National Teaching Awards and mark the achievements of all our very worthy winners. Thank you for your continued work and congratulations!!"

National Thank a Teacher Day and the Pearson National Teaching Awards are run by the Teaching Awards Trust, an independent charity established over 25 years ago to celebrate the transformative impact of education, shining a spotlight on the pivotal roles teachers, support staff, colleges, schools and early years educators play in inspiring young people, every single day.

Local college to drive student success

From September, Nescot College in Ewell, Surrey is offering a new course on Motorsport Vehicle Maintenance and Repair with spaces still available for school leavers aged 16 - 19. An element of the course includes the preparation and inspection of a real-life Nescot racing car which will be entering high profile racing events around the UK. Student mechanics will attend track days at circuits like Brands Hatch, Donington Park and Silverstone to experience motorsport in action and keep the car in top condition.

The one-year qualification - the Institute of Motor Industry Diploma in Motorsport Vehicle Maintenance and Repair - is an addition to Nescot's well-established Motor Vehicle Department. It's a full-time course which involves a combination of practical experience and theory. Students learn on several vehicles in the college workshop including the racing car, and study systems such as the brakes, engine and suspension.

The course has been developed by a teaching team with a track record of success in national motorsport competitions. Students from other departments such as engineering, media, sport, and hospitality will also be able to take part in the competitions, contributing their own skills and forming a multidisciplinary motor racing team.

Nescot will enter their team, driver and car into the Student Motorsport Challenge which is embedded into the British Racing & Sports Car Club Nankang Tyres City Car Cup. The season typically consists of 7 race events which include 17 races. Students race against other schools, colleges and universities in the Challenge and also compete against the professional teams and drivers in the City Car Cup. Students will be responsible for the smooth running of the car and will attend racing circuits to experience motorsport, learn on the job and network.

George Keith, Head of Curriculum for Construction, Trades and Green Technology at Nescot said "If you want to be a mechanic or have an interest in other roles in motorsport, then this course will be right up your street. You get hands on experience in the workshop, and then at the racetrack. You'll be making our Nescot race car the best it can be, while getting work-ready and

learning vital skills for a career, post-college. We still have some spaces available, so why not sign up and be a key part of our racing team?"

Julie Kapsalis, CEO and Principal at Nescot said "We're keen to offer courses on things that young people are passionate about and wherever possible, help them find ways to turn those interests into careers that they'll love. This is a perfect example, mixing motorsport with mechanics to create an exciting course which can set them up for a great career. I can't wait to see Nescot's racing car in action, and it will be amazing knowing that our students got it to the start line, with their new skills, knowledge and hard work. Then it's just fingers crossed for a win!"

Local businesses are being encouraged to support or partner with the Nescot race team. Sponsors already on board include LKQ Euro Car parts (which has donated new vehicle parts for the build) and Bossdog vehicle wrapping in Redhill (which has agreed to carry out the wrap at a discounted price). Sponsors not only support young people's education but may also have the opportunity to get their logo on the race car and attend motorsport events. Businesses interested in finding out more, can contact George Keith on gkeith@nescot.ac.uk or call 0208 394 1731, extension 3136.

Entry requirements for the course are 4 GCSEs grade 9-3 (A*- D) that includes English grade 3 and Maths grade 4. Applicants must have a strong interest in the Motorsport industry. Following completion of the course, a successful student with this qualification may have the opportunity to attain a related Higher Education qualification or be employed as an apprentice within the Motor or Motorsport industry.

To find out more about the Motorsport course, call 020 8394 3038, visit www.nescot.ac.uk or email adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk. More information on the motorsport competition Nescot is taking part in can be found at www.studentmotorsport.com

Nescot is holding a Summer Fair, where prospective students can visit the college and see the facilities. This is taking place on Saturday 15th June 2024, 10.00am - 2.00pm.

Credit for image: Student Motorsport

Student racemakers favourites at the Derby

Ewell based **Nescot** (North East Surrey College of Technology) were proud to be part of this year's **Epsom Derby** Festival. Our Travel and Tourism students were once again 'Racemakers' and our Animal Management students presented personalised handmade plaques to the grooms of the Betfred Derby runners.

NESCOT on Reigate Road, Ewell is the location for a local HUSTINGS, staged by Epsom and Ewell Times, for the Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Candidates in the Adrian Mann Theatre at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June. All welcome.

Our Travel and Tourism Level 2 and 3 students were part of the 'Racemaker' team on 31 May and 1 June. They used skills developed within their course to assist visitors with directions and queries, helping to ensure an excellent experience was had by all. The students benefitted from both, the preparation and employment during the event. The experience has allowed them to develop their academic and transferrable skills, from CV development to interviews and onsite advice and guidance with Epsom Downs Racecourse. They received training on the various enquiries they might receive including how to effectively deal with a range of customer service scenarios.

A team of four of our Level 2 and 3 Animal Management students also presented unique mementos made from wood off cuts that bore the names of the horses running in the Derby. These personalised and handmade plaques were presented to each groom. The students were chosen for their consistent hard work and involvement in sustainability projects as part of their course.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO of Nescot, said, "We are proud of our involvement at the Betfred Derby Festival. Thanks to our staff for creating these collaborative opportunities and to our students for being excellent ambassadors for the College. It has been an incredible experience for them to be part of an internationally renowned premier racing event.

"We are hugely appreciative of Epsom Down Racecourse for inviting our students to be part of this prestigious event. Working with businesses and the community is important to us as a college and we look forward to our continued partnership that will enrich our learners with practical experiences to prepare them for their careers."

Jennifer Fasad and **Jemma Brodie**, Travel and Tourism lecturers at Nescot also expressed their gratitude. They said, "A huge thank you to the team at Epsom Downs Racecourse who ensured a comprehensive training programme was given to all learners involved. The opportunity to gain first hand customer service skills at an event of this scale offers them an all-important experience as they consider career paths in the travel, hospitality and events industry."

Zoe Brown, Head of Curriculum, Animal Studies, commented, "Our students were thrilled with the invitation to go behind the scenes in the stables area and meet the people who care for the horses. It's been an amazing experience for them. Thanks to Epsom Downs Racecourse for organising this opportunity. We are delighted that the personalised plaques were well received and we've been asked to provide them next year too."

Tom Sammes, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said "We were pleased to offer students from Nescot the opportunity to be part of the 'Racemaker' team at the Betfred Derby Festival. Their enthusiasm and commitment to learn and execute their roles is commendable, and the whole team were professional and dedicated across the two days.

"We were also delighted to help the students present the beautifully designed plaques to the grooms of the Betfred Derby runners and want to thank them for their hard work in the build up to the event.

"Epsom Downs Racecourse is looking forward to offering a range of different projects to support study programmes for young people throughout the rest of the year. Nescot is a huge part of the local community, and we want to help them continue to make a positive impact on the young people that come through their doors."

Travel and Tourism student Frankie said, "We had such a great time working as part of the Racemaker Team. The guidance and the allocation of roles and locations was clear and organised. This opportunity has allowed me to develop my leadership skills. I was proud to be placed on the radio as a team leader during the second day."

Another student Josh added, "It was an amazing experience! Helping customers has developed my confidence. I had some fantastic personal moments and even had the opportunity to see the beautiful race horses in the winner enclosure."

This is the second year that our Travel and Tourism students have worked alongside The Jockey Club as part of the Beacon Project that was set up in in Autumn 2022. This collaboration offers our students work experience opportunities with various projects at Epsom Downs Racecourse to aid with their studies and understanding of the racing industry and career opportunities it presents.

Nescot's Travel and Tourism students as part of the 'Racemaker' team at Epsom Downs Racecourse for the Betfred Derby Festival along with Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO. Photo credit: Nescot

From blow your hair to blow your mind?

Nescot college in Ewell, Surrey is investing £650,000 to transform a hair studio on campus into a virtual reality (VR), immersive space for its students. The state-of-the-art technology, currently being installed, will be used across a wide range of courses on offer at Nescot and includes driving simulators and immersive learning spaces which work with a variety of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. This will allow students to gain specialist skills and experiences, like driving a forklift truck, or navigating a busy A&E ward, without even leaving the classroom.

Nescot will have a range of cutting-edge technology, including an Igloo, immersive room, and vehicle simulators. The Igloo is cylindrical, six metres in diameter and features a 360-degree projection system that can 'transport' groups of students around the world. It offers things like virtual field trips, design opportunities and gaming development. It can also recreate complex activities or hazardous environments so students can safely learn.

A suite of four advanced simulators will provide vehicle handling training for a wide range of machinery, from cranes to fire engines. These simulators, alongside virtual reality headsets, will mean students can work together to refine their driving or operation skills in a realistic scenario where multiple machines or vehicles are in use.

The immersive room has a projection system which equips all the walls with screens. Two of the screens are interactive and respond to touch, creating a hands-on learning experience. Two ultra-high-definition screens are also incorporated, and cameras enable instructors and students to magnify objects of interest and project them onto any of the four screens, facilitating discussion. The technology also brings remote learners into the classroom via a dedicated video call screen.

The facility further cements Nescot's reputation as a hub of innovation, having recently opened robotics, AI and cyber security facilities as part of its Institute of Technology. The staff/student hair studio, which was a commercial salon and not a learning space for students, has already moved out of the space and has been relocated nearby. There is no impact at all on the Nescot

hairdressing course, which is still a valued part of the curriculum.

Julie Kapsalis, CEO and Principal at Nescot said "We pride ourselves on innovation, and giving our students the best experience at Nescot, so we're adopting this cutting-edge technology which will be a game changer. It can virtually transport students around the world to learn, allows them to safely practice dangerous scenarios, and is a fun and exciting way to boost motivation, creativity, and engagement. We can't wait to get it installed."

Somayyeh Clifton, Head of Quality Improvement & Innovation at Nescot said "This is not just for students doing IT related subjects, we expect it to be used across the whole curriculum, giving students the skills and experience they need to succeed in the modern world. We've come a long way since teaching from the front of the room and we really value the importance of learning through experience. We're keen to get prospective students along to our open days to find out more about this, and what we'll have to offer in the next academic year."

Julie and Somayyeh are both part of AI in Education initiative, with Julie sitting on the Strategic Board and Somayyeh on the Practitioners Panel. AI in Education aims to support and advise schools and colleges so they can maximise the benefits of AI and minimise the risks.

The funding to create the immersive space has been provided from the Government's Local Skills Improvement Fund, a project which aims to support local people into work. Nescot is working with other local colleges and universities to better support the skills needs of the labour market in key areas identified by local businesses - CreaTech, Advance Manufacturing, Engineering and Construction, Digital, and Employability and Professional skills.

As well as being beneficial for Nescot students, the college will be encouraging local businesses to get involved, by using the technology to train staff. Partnerships with business and enterprise are invaluable for both parties as organisations get to access cutting edge training and learning resources, plus a pool of talented, experienced students who can enter the workforce via apprenticeships, work placements and post-college recruitment.

Nescot offers college courses for school leavers and adults, with a wide range of career-focused vocational courses including Animal Care, Business, Computing and IT, Construction, Performing Arts, Childcare, Health & Social Care and Beauty Therapy. The college has two events coming up, where prospective students can see what's on offer, and learn more about the immersive classroom as it's being built.

- Open evening, Wednesday 22 May 2024, 4.30 7.30pm
- Summer fair, Saturday 15th June 2024, 10.00am 2.00pm

To find out more, call 020 8394 3038, visit www.nescot.ac.uk or email adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk

Local businesses interested in using the immersive classroom for training, or working with the college on apprenticeships, work placements or recruitment should contact businesscentre@nescot.ac.uk or call 020 8394 8593.