

Best in Class!

Undergraduate School Quarterly
Summer 2025 Edition



Hello & Welcome

I am absolutely thrilled to share that the Undergraduate School won a prestigious award at the Herald Education Awards in Glasgow last month. The Widening Access Award, one of a slew for New College Lanarkshire, is validation of our unwavering commitment to transforming lives right here in North Lanarkshire. We've always known that our region deserves better than being second-lowest in Scotland for degree attainment, with just 23.1% of adults holding qualifications compared to the national average of 32.5%. This award proves we're not just talking about change - we're delivering it.

The numbers speak volumes about our remarkable journey since launching in June 2024. While we initially hoped for 50 students, over 180 brave souls took that first leap of faith across our initial seven courses. Today, we're celebrating over 300 students across our expanded programmes - each one a testament to the power of accessible, local higher education.

What makes me particularly proud is who our students are. Nearly 70% are women, and almost 40% come from Scotland's most deprived areas. These aren't just statistics - they represent real people from our communities who are seizing opportunities that might never have existed otherwise.

This award belongs to every student who took a chance on themselves, every staff member who believed in our vision, and every community partner who supported our mission.

You'll hear from some of those staff and students in these pages, and meet some of our new honorary appointees as we gear up for a fantastic year two of the undergraduate school.

Nicola Mulholland

Dean of the Undergraduate School & Academic Partnerships



Shaheen Tariq

Lecturer



Shaheen Tariq's journey from retail and investment banking to New College Lanarkshire' lecturer shows how following your passion can change your life

"I was constantly being pulled into training projects, but I needed a change," Tariq reflects on her banking career. Her transition proved natural: "My passion for politics made the seem like the obvious choice." Starting on a temporary contract she joined NCL in 2019 and quickly fell in love with the job.

What sets Tariq apart is her innovative approach to engagement. "I try to make it visual and do things differently to pull everyone in," she explains. Her hybrid teaching model accommodates older students who need online flexibility, while her use of contemporary examples sparks meaningful classroom discussions.

Teaching in an area of significant deprivation, Tariq understands her students' challenges

intimately. "Many arrive with self-doubt, having been told they'll never amount to anything," she observes. Her response is something her students calls "The Shaheenism method"—providing students with "a platform to be the best version of themselves and tools to succeed."

She describes teaching the Social Science degree at the Undergraduate school over the past year as a brilliant experience. "The students have been great, as has the support from UWS, and we've not had a single drop out."

"I'm very much a people person," Tariq emphasizes, and through listening to students and ensuring "they learn what they need in a fun way," she continues to help student achieve what they thought they couldn't.

Chloe Sandilands

Student President at Motherwell



Chloe Sandilands' journey to winning the Outstanding Contribution from a College Student Award at the 2025 Herald Education Awards began from the most challenging circumstances. When she first enrolled at New College Lanarkshire for her Computing course, Chloe was homeless, having been kicked out of her parents' house and living out of a backpack while sleeping on friends' couches.

Rather than being defeated by these circumstances, Chloe channeled her experiences into extraordinary leadership. After flourishing in her first year and securing accommodation, she progressed to the college's undergraduate school and successfully ran for Student President. Her early struggles instilled a passionate commitment to sustainability and helping others who felt powerless.

As Student President, Chloe has delivered remarkable impact both locally and nationally. She is one of only two students in Scotland chosen by QAA as Topic Leads, working

at national level to shape tertiary quality assurance models across Scottish institutions. Her initiatives include establishing the Buddy Programme for new students, collecting for food banks and running sustainability workshops.

Chloe's leadership extends beyond formal roles. She increased the college's social media engagement significantly, organised cross-departmental events fostering collaboration, and established the Motherwell Student Council. Her work with the Supported Learning Department demonstrates her commitment to inclusivity and has created lasting change.

Colleagues praise her as "incredibly **thoughtful and caring,**" noting her ability to **connect with students from all backgrounds while maintaining infectious humour and positive energy that motivates the entire college community.**

Ministerial Visit



New College Lanarkshire welcomed Graeme Dey, Minister for Further and Higher Education, to its Motherwell Campus in April, where he witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of innovative educational partnerships in widening access to higher education.

Staff and students presented on how the partnership has delivered six new degree programmes, all developed and delivered by NCL, attracting approximately 200 students with an impressive retention rate of 88%.

Significantly, 40% of students enrolled come from SIMD 20 areas, highlighting the programme's success in reaching communities that have traditionally faced barriers to higher education access.

The degree programmes have been strategically designed to align with the specific skills requirements of Lanarkshire, covering critical sectors including:

- Health and Social Care
- Digital & AI
- Cyber Security
- Dental Nursing

During his visit, Minister Dey, who was accompanied by our honorary appointee Professor John McKendrick, praised the undergraduate school repeating his earlier comments that colleges and universities are "doing lots of other things behind the scenes for which they are not given credit" in their efforts to widen the access pool to higher education.

Meet our new Honorary appointees

As the Undergraduate school grows, we are delighted to welcome a new batch of leaders and thinkers who care deeply about Lanarkshire and its future.

David Equi

CEO and Managing Director of Equi's Ice Cream, a much loved fourth-generation Lanarkshire family business.

Yvonne Lindsey

Director of Telecom Networks, a successful telecommunications company, with extensive experience in customer service, sales, and business leadership.

Susan Burn

An experienced business analyst with a passion for charitable work. She is a panel member within the Children's Hearing System Scotland and the Law Society of Scotland.

Jon Burn

Chair of George Taylor and Company, which operates the largest foundry and ironworks in Lanarkshire that can trace its roots back to a humble blacksmith's in 1832.

Cat Boyd

A writer, filmmaker, poet and trade union activist who has become a challenging and insightful voice in Scottish public life.

Louise Long

Chief Executive of NHS Lanarkshire, bringing over 30 years' public sector experience across education, social work, and health and social care.

Gareth McGuinness

A leader in technological adaptation, who is currently Vice President, Technology of Haleon, a multinational Health Care Cpmpany.

Eve Lewis

Director of sparqs (student partnerships in quality Scotland), an agency which puts students at the heart of decisions being made about the learning experience.

David Wood

Appointed as CEO of Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire last year, David is an experienced leader of voluntary organisations in England and Scotland.

Bob Morton

The director of RPM Arts, a Theatrical production company.



**NEW
COLLEGE
LANARKSHIRE**

Undergraduate School

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