

Successful First Year for Student-run Business at OCVC

/EINPresswire.com/ A student-run business set up last Christmas to boost city-centre parking for Oxford shoppers is celebrating a successful first year.

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The car parking business, operated by Public Services students at [Oxford & Cherwell Valley College](#) ([OCVC](#)), has generated around £50,000 since launching last December.

The business offers visitors to the city centre all day parking for just £5 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays, at OCVC's campus in Oxpens Road. The campus provides around 110 parking spaces, with links to the West End of the city via the footbridge over the river.

As well as giving students experience of managing a business and the opportunity to gain paid employment while they study, the project is also raising money for the college's Student Fund. This fund supports new teaching and learning facilities and also acts as a hardship fund to help students whose financial situation might prevent them from attending college.

Money raised by SweetFE during the year has helped to fund one of the college's new learning zones, kitted out with the latest technology to support students' research and presentation skills. It has also supported a new business incubation area, providing office space and equipment for new student businesses.

The car parking business is just one of the projects developed by SweetFE, a community interest company set up by OCVC to help promote enterprise and entrepreneurialism across the college and further education sector.

Sally Dicketts, principal of OCVC, said: "This project is a great example of enterprise in action. The business is giving students valuable experience of working in a commercial environment, which improves their long-term employability and also enhances the skills they are learning in the classroom. Added to that, it is helping students to earn while they study, and supporting the whole college environment by generating income for the Student Fund."

"This is exactly the sort of initiative we are encouraging through SweetFE. We want the students who come to OCVC to have the opportunities to develop entrepreneurial and enterprise-related skills that will give them the edge over their peers when it comes to entering employment or progressing onto higher education."

"The government is clear that these skills are central to stimulating growth in our economy. It isn't just about developing a generation of entrepreneurs but recognising that the attributes of creativity, problem-solving and teamwork are those demanded by today's employers."

"We are delighted that our students have made the car parking business such a success in its first year and we look forward to seeing it go from strength to strength."

One of the students to have worked for the car parking business is 17-year-old Efosa Nehiweze. Efosa, who is studying for a Diploma in Public Services, said: "Efosa said: "Working for the car parking business has been really good because it has helped me to learn more about dealing with customers and it has also improved my communication skills."

"Working in the car park at weekends means that you can put what you have learnt in theory in the classroom into practice in a real-world environment."

"It requires you to move out of your comfort zone and develop new skills, particularly because you are dealing with members of the public as paying customers. It has also been really useful to be able to earn money while I am studying."

OCVC's work in the field of enterprise has featured in a best practice guide published by Ofsted. The report, identifying best practice in promoting enterprise-related skills and the entrepreneurial capabilities of 16-19 year olds, follows visits by Ofsted inspectors to 15 further education colleges, including OCVC, earlier this year.

OCVC offer a wide range of full and part-time courses from entry to degree level, a range of learning for leisure courses, bespoke employer training, and courses which will help the unemployed get back into work. Oxford and Cherwell Valley College have a friendly and supportive environment where students can make friends, enjoy life as they learn, and enhance their employability, confidence and communication skills alongside their qualification. OCVC's campuses are located in the ancient university city of Oxford.

Media Contact:

Jonathan Goode

Oxford and Cherwell Valley College

01865 551890

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