

# MCAST LINK

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FRONT COVER

MCAST Celebrates Diversity Day

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# Editorial

**Welcome** to the Summer issue of our magazine MCASTlink. We are proud to announce the publication of the new MCAST Prospectus 2019/2020 that is full of interesting and varied full-time courses ranging from certificates to Master's degree courses as well as the inauguration of the new Institute of Engineering and Transport block that will be operational this September.

MCAST has launched the new Well-being Hub for all students and members of staff. Therapy services, addiction related issues, mental health services, nutritional advice, tobacco cessation support and sexual health services are now being offered by qualified and experienced personnel. These services ensure that the psychosocial, emotional and mental well-being of students and staff are being addressed in a professional way.

H.E. George Vella, the President of Malta attended Diversity Day 2019 that was celebrated at MCAST to promote cultural awareness and cultural understanding. This day was a great success with many students and members of staff participating in discussions and singing and dancing activities. This besides the Cultural Village that included several stalls from different countries.

Community Services student Annemarie Bugeja shares her experience at the Special Olympic Games with MCAST journalism student Denilson Brincat. Well done to Annemarie for her determination, perseverance and success!

This issue also includes an interesting article on good governance by Mr Frederick Schembri, MCAST President of the Board of Governors, an introduction to the MCAST Governors, a snapshot of the MCAST Maintenance Team led by Mr Saviour Grech, as well as the ongoing activities and events organised by the MCAST Institutes and Departments.

Hope you enjoy this edition and we wish you a great Summer!

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# Message from the Principal & CEO

PROF JOACHIM JAMES CALLEJA



**The** summer period serves as a time for reviewing the past academic year and prepare for the new intake in September.

Several events, which occurred during these last few months, augur well for our future as the main public provider of vocational and professional education in Malta. The visit by the Prime Minister of Malta Joseph Muscat in May marked the launching of new premises for the Institute for Engineering and Transport and the official launch of the College's Strategic Plan 2019-2021 two important landmarks in the history of this College.

Engineering studies are gaining increasingly positive response from industry. With our graduate engineers having access to a warranting process, we expect that the courses will attract more students in the coming years.

During a colloquium with industry, the College launched its Prospectus 2019-2020. The 189 full-time programmes at MCAST could help close the gap between the two worlds of education and work.

STEM subjects were also the focus of a unique collaboration between the University of Malta, the Malta Council for Science and Technology and MCAST. With Industry 4.0 determining the jobs of today and those of the future, no efforts we should spare no efforts to attract students as early as possible in their school life to science subjects.

Artificial intelligence, automation and big data are dominating the world of work and our own lives.

Over these last few months, colleagues in MCAST's Applied Research and Innovation Centre have been drafting an AI Strategy, which should lead to the College becoming the innovation hub for education and training in Malta. We are strong believers that AI will be the ideal partner for lecturers and students in education and training. In the coming months, we shall be launching this proposed strategy for

consultation and later for implementation.

Coupled with this initiative is our work on the internationalisation of the College. Already 787 international students from 76 nationalities attend regular courses at MCAST. Our plans are to increase the number of international students to enable the College move towards a more inclusive approach to learning. Cultures enrich other cultures. The cross-fertilization of different modes of living and working is benefit to our learning environments. Most sectors are internationalised and mobility is part and parcel of any form of learning experience.

The world today has truly become a small village in which news and events are real time occurrences, where big data is engulfing our way of operating and where the interaction with knowledge is a constant sociological phenomenon. Engaging with more students from across the world will enhance our own Maltese students and places MCAST at the heart of vocational and professional activity in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The College will embark on a more sustainable approach towards the provision of part-time courses for local as well as for international consumption. Enabling the College to be a key player in the skilling, re-skilling and upskilling of learners and workers is at the heart of MCAST's remit. With an estimated increase in the number of enrolled students for the next academic year, the years ahead look challenging but also promising.



# First phase of MCAST Institute of Engineering and Transport inaugurated after €6m investment



On 20th May 2019 Hon Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister inaugurated the first phase of a new block to house the Institute of Engineering and Transport. This new engineering block with an investment of €6 million will host over 1,300 MCAST students.



**The** building will be fully functional by September 2020 and was purposely built to showcase an industrial environment. It is a dedicated building with the specialist equipment and facilities available for prospective engineers to further their studies. It forms part of a much larger project to expand the MCAST Campus with modern buildings to house the various Institutes. The project is part-financed by the EU.

# MCAST launches new Prospectus 2019/2020



MCAST launched its new Prospectus for academic year 2019/2020. This new Prospectus includes 188 courses in various subjects and levels. During the launch, MCAST Principal Prof Joachim James Calleja stated that the courses, some of which are new, are preparing students for the labour force in various sectors.

**The** courses in the College's six Institutes cover applied sciences, creative arts, electronic and mechanical engineering, information technology and community services. They lead to qualification levels that vary from certificates up to Master's degrees. There are also apprenticeship programmes that offer work experience with academic learning. Professor Joachim James Calleja said that the courses were drafted in consultation, among others, with industry representatives and Jobsplus to ensure that these will prepare students for careers in various sectors. "Quality is always measured with our students' success in finding jobs and the type of employment; our records are very good – over 90% of our students immediately find a job."

Hon Evarist Bartolo, Minister for Education and Employment said that MCAST is offering training

opportunities to over 6,500 students on a full-time basis in Malta and Gozo. The Minister added that the Government is giving priority to strengthening life-long education and educational institutions such as MCAST, so that workers' skills of workers are updated according to the new evolving challenges in the labour market.



# MCAST hosts Transnational Meeting



MCAST hosted twenty-six participants from Cyprus, Latvia, Russia and Uzbekistan for the 6th transnational meeting of the Erasmus+ RUECVET project.

**This** project sees European partners supporting Russian and Uzbek colleges and universities in their implementation of the ECVET system, and also facilitates the mobility of students from one education institution to another during their studies.

A key outcome of this project was the conversion of a number of units, delivered in Russian and Uzbek institutions, to units of learning outcomes. Another highlight was the setting up of four training centres – two in Russia and two in Uzbekistan – to provide training in ECVET to VET professionals. Further information on the

project can be found in [www.ruecvet.ru](http://www.ruecvet.ru).

Participants at the meeting also met with Prof Joachim James Calleja, MCAST Principal and CEO, who is also President of the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Although the Erasmus+ RUECVET project is nearing its end, MCAST remains committed to explore further collaborative partnerships with foreign educational institutions in an effort to share best practices and ultimately offer an improved learning experience to students.



# Memorandum of Understanding signed between MCAST and SR Technics

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and SR Technics represented by its Training Services signed an agreement that will contribute to the development of a strong supply of adequately trained technical persons in aircraft maintenance by means of jointly setting up a training centre in Malta.



**The** Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed at the MCAST Main Campus by Prof Joachim James Calleja, MCAST Principal, and Mr Stephan Wiegelmann, VP Training Services at SR Technics.

Through this collaboration both parties will support the growing aircraft maintenance industry with adequately trained technical, support and certifying staff to sustain the current and future needs of the industry. They will explore opportunities to offer Vocational Education and Training and apprenticeship programmes and will allocate the necessary infrastructure and support structures for further technical training services to be provided in Malta.

They will design and develop new training facilities and more technology-based and mobile learning opportunities to meet the emerging training requirements including new learning methodologies such as VR and AR. VR or Virtual Reality refers to an interactive computer-generated experience taking place within a simulated environment, whilst AR or Augmented Reality is an interactive experience

of a real-world environment where the objects that reside in the real-world are “augmented” by computer-generated perceptual information. MCAST will provide the infrastructure to develop and enhance the new joint training centre in Malta whereas SR Technics provides the legislative infrastructure and personnel with appropriate skills to accommodate the needs of the market.

Stephan Wiegelmann, VP Training Services of SR Technics said: “I am delighted to be partnering with MCAST to help deliver the training for our current workforce and the workforce of the future and also setting up the training centre here in Malta. These new collaboration opportunities will greatly benefit the aviation maintenance industry.”

Prof Joachim James Calleja, MCAST Principal and CEO stated: “Today we add another important leading industry player to the list of MCAST partners. Through this collaboration our students will be provided with state-of-the-art training in the latest best practices and emerging technologies within this important growing industry.”



# MCAST Energy Knowledge Gain in France during the first JUMP2Excel Workshop

MCAST Energy team members participated in a three-day workshop organised by the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) in Cadarache, France. Dr Ing. Brian Azzopardi, JUMP2Excel Coordinator; Renata Mikalauskiene, Projects Manager (Research); and MRes Candidates and Research Support Assistants Marina Prutianov, George Bugeja and Ing. Albert Zerafa were among the participants. MCAST Energy is part of the MCAST Institute of Engineering and Transport and collaborates with MCAST Capital Projects Department on energy infrastructure projects.



**The** JUMP2Excel project participants from Malta, Spain (CENER) and France had the opportunity to meet a strong delegation of the Electricity Syndicate of Martinique Island, representatives from the Energy group at Aix-Marseille University, Aéroport Marseille Provence, Mines ParisTech, EDF-SEI Corsica and the CAPENERGIES competitive cluster.

A number of site visits were also organised to CEA outdoor solar test facilities, MEGASOL Platform 13MWp solar photovoltaic facility, Thassalia marine geothermal power plant facility (ENGIE Group) and Cité des Energies micro algae facility.

The JUMP2Excel: Joint Universal activities for the Mediterranean PV Integration Excellence project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 810809.

JUMP2Excel activities may be also open to the Maltese research community and the public, free of charge. For further information visit: [JUMP2Excel.eu](http://JUMP2Excel.eu).



*Students attending the Undergraduate Diploma in Hotel and Hospitality Management programme at MCAST were given the opportunity to tour the Cruise Liner Oceana as part of the Introduction to Cruise Operations Unit. This particular unit is being run with the cooperation of Valletta Cruise Port, who also made the necessary arrangements for the students to visit the Cruise Liner. Students were accompanied by Mr. Henry Mifsud, Coordinator of the Tourism and Hospitality Programmes at MCAST.*

# MCAST's Let's Get Heard!

## Debate Tournament 2018/2019



**DURING** the months of March, April and May 2019 a Debate Tournament was organised by a number of MCAST Foundation College Student Mentors and Aġenzija Żgħażaġh Youth Workers. The main aim of this pilot project was to provide young people with life skills and soft skills that would help them throughout their life journey and academic journey at MCAST. The objective was to enable young people to develop certain skills such as presentation techniques, communication skills, time management, research skills, leadership skills, public speaking, organisational skills, and most importantly, team building skills. The tournament was the first of its kind at MCAST with 27 students from Level 3 courses participating from various Institutes within MCAST. Following the tournament's rules and regulations, the young people participated in groups of three. Aġenzija Żgħażaġh provided all participants with a training session about debating techniques for young people, while the Student Mentors provided briefing sessions to the tournament judging panels. Debate topics varied from current local issues to more generic argumentative topics. These included topics like: 'community work should be given instead of a prison sentence'; 'school examinations should be removed'; 'people caught in possession of drugs should be imprisoned'; 'Paceville should be discontinued'; and 'the car race track in Malta should be constructed'. Debates were scheduled according to participants' timetables, encouraging young people to take part in the tournament. Throughout the debates, which were held at the Aġenzija Żgħażaġh MCAST Youth Hub, the organisers could see that

a number of the objectives were met. For instance, young people who were not confident in speaking publicly, broke out of their comfort zone by speaking in front of their peers.

After the first round of debates, four teams, 3.1C Knights, JDS Ltd, Triplets, and Xarabank United, qualified for the semi-finals. A week later the last two teams, 3.1C Knights and JDS Ltd, met for the final debate. 'Domestic violence is always carried out by men' was the final topic voted by the organisers as the topic to be debated in the final. This final debate took place on Thursday 23rd May 2019 at the MCAST Student House. Present for this occasion were Dr. Tatjana Chircop, MCAST Deputy Principal Arts and Social Sciences – VPET, Jason Zammit, Manager at Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, Isabelle Mallia, Senior Youth Worker at Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, the Student Mentors team, and last but not least, the young people who participated in the tournament and their colleagues who were present to support their favourite team. The winning team was JDS Ltd, made up of Dean Lee Galea and Samuel Muscat, who were presented with a trophy, a €240 voucher and a certificate of participation. The runner-up team, 3.1C Knights, was made up of Miguel Brignano and Justin Galea, who were given a cash voucher of €100 together with a certificate of participation, while all the rest of the participants were presented with a certificate of participation. The trophy and prizes were kindly sponsored by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh. Following a satisfactory first debate tournament, the organisers are looking forward to plan the next debate tournament for academic year 2019-2020.



# MCAST and ESPLORA work together



MCAST and the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) have a long-standing working relationship in various sectors. Ever since Esplora opened its doors in October 2016, both entities signed a memorandum of understanding which focuses on the fields of STEM engagement and career guidance. Both entities operate within the Vocational Education and Training field through different sectors: MCAST being a Formal Education Institution whilst Esplora is a non-Formal Education Institution. Vocational Education and Training has met great development as it is applied in great extent in developed, mostly industrialised countries such as Malta, in order to equip the workforce with the new knowledge, skills, competences, behaviours and attitudes that the labour market demands.

**Through** this MoU, MCAST students benefit from internships, assignment case studies and work experience opportunities at MCST in general and in particular within Esplora, the Interactive Science Centre. Conversely Esplora benefits in raising awareness about priority occupations in STEM careers through 'Meet the Engineer/Scientist/Tech Expert/Researcher' sessions with students and families and a new state-of-the-art Exhibition featuring VR and/or AR highlighting STEM careers.

MCST, the University of Malta (UM) and MCAST have recently embarked on a tripartite national approach to

take the necessary actions to tackle the ever-increasing problem of skills gap in STEM. In this regard, the National STEM Engagement Position Paper and Roadmap have been launched through the National STEM Engagement Conference (NSEC), held at Esplora on May 3rd 2019 for which Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando – MCST Executive Chairman, Prof Joachim James Calleja – MCAST Principal and CEO and Prof Alfred Vella – UM Rector, were present.

Based on the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the National STEM Engagement Position Paper Rationale highlights the 9 points mentioned hereunder:



### 1.

Skill acquisition and development are essential for the performance and modernisation of labour markets in order to provide new forms of flexibility and security for job seekers, employees, and employers alike. School subjects, teaching personnel and the way STEM subjects and careers are presented/marketed need to mirror this.

### 2.

Skills mismatches hinder productivity and growth and affect Member States' resilience to economic shocks. Through this tripartite approach, we aim to highlight the importance of STEM careers and raise awareness of the shortage in STEM subject choices and careers among respective stakeholders.

### 3.

New ways of working are influencing the types of skills needed. These include innovation and entrepreneurship. Many sectors are undergoing rapid technological change and digital skills are needed for all jobs, from the simplest to the most complex. Highly developed skills enable people to adapt to unforeseen changes. We aim to exploit this digital trend in a positive and sustainable way, through the integration of Digital Content and Methods in our STEM initiatives by including marketing for STEM subjects, courses and careers as well as by organising events and educational outputs at Esplora.



## **21.**

Enticing women in older age brackets to get into employment after decades of inactivity in the labour market might be very difficult. In a society that is becoming increasingly digitalised, older females should be given opportunities to learn digital skills to be able to live meaningful lives and have their rights as engaged citizens safeguarded. Inclusive labour markets should draw on the skills and talents of all, including the low-skilled and other vulnerable groups. In the global race for talent, we aim at raising awareness of STEM careers among women, through highlighting role models (local and abroad, present and past), campaigns and exhibitions targeting girls in STEM with more gender-inclusive content, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **5.**

The quality and relevance of the education and training available, including teaching standards, vary widely. We support the shift necessary towards more formative and applied methods of assessments in STEM subjects and courses. Formative methods in STEM at secondary school level can also build upon the very positive experience obtained so far in the teaching of VET subjects (including IT and Engineering Technology). Here, formative assessment spread over the three years of secondary school have proved popular with students and effective in leading them to learn while doing very well in the final SEC results in these subjects.

## **6.**

Esplora will work closer with MCAST and the University of Malta to highlight research, course content, careers and relevance of STEM among our thousands of visitors, through Esplora.

## **7.**

People increasingly learn in settings outside formal education – online, at work, through professional courses, social activities or volunteering. These learning experiences can often go unrecognised. Esplora aims to address this issue by having informal and non-formal education recognised as part of the School Leaving Certificate and part of the Applied STEM Subject Units. Esplora will also be used as a main hub for public engagement in STEM and research, both at the interactive science centre as well as by means of its outreach programmes.

## **8.**

A strong STEM related campaign which combines 21st century skills needs to be embarked upon amongst early years students at home; at school with year 7 and year 8 students and in informal and non-formal learning institutions such as Esplora. Esplora already holds a number of outputs for early years based on learning through play, discovery and experimentation in line with the emergent curriculum.

## **9.**

We aim to highlight the need for tracer studies and research in related areas such as: STEM-related Employability Index, STEM-Literacy and Attitudes Survey among the general public and students alike and a more detailed Labour Force Survey highlighting specific forecasts/foresights, surpluses and/or shortages in STEM.

Esplora encourages MCAST lecturers to bring students over to Esplora to Explore, Think and Imagine through curriculum-linked and tailor-made hands-on visits. The Esplora Programme Development team can meet with lecturers pre and/or post visit to help them and their students make the most out of their visit. For more information contact us on [programmes@esplora.org.mt](mailto:programmes@esplora.org.mt). We also encourage MCAST students to attend our varied Thematic Events spread over the whole year. For more information on upcoming events kindly visit our Facebook page or website – [esplora.org.mt](http://esplora.org.mt).

# MCAST

# Board of Governors

## 2018/2020



Mr **Frederick Schembri**  
President

Mr Frederick Schembri is a proficient executive with a proven track record spanning twenty-five years in highly regulated manufacturing industries, having broad management experience in leadership roles, and with specialisation in integrated global supply chain initiatives. Mr Schembri has been involved in a number of mergers and acquisitions on a global level, thus manifesting Mr Schembri's negotiation skills. He has been the catalyst of five pharmaceutical start-ups both locally and overseas including establishing operations in India and China respectively. The architect of an extensive restructuring programme for a manufacturing operation in EEU including an upgrade of company infrastructure to meet EUGMP standards. A creative thinker, a positive disruptor with the propensity to anticipate business trends. For a

number of years, Frederick has participated in supply chain strategies pertaining to disaster relief operations. These include humanitarian aid programmes, predominantly in sub-Saharan African regions, funded by institutions such as: UNICEF, WHO, Red Cross, Red Crescent, MSF, and IDA amongst others. Frederick Schembri is the founder and managing director of one of Malta's leading foreign-owned pharmaceutical companies listed on the ISEX stock exchange. In addition to the local context, activities include directing the group's European supply chain operations at a Pan-European level.

In June 2018 he was appointed President of the Board of Governors of Malta's Vocational College University, namely MCAST, with the objective of developing collaborations between industry and educators. His vision for vocational education is set in the context of high-end research initiatives with industry which offers a new kind of technical education. One that our country and economy desperately need and which is vital for the development of the kind of skills the young generation require to compete in the global market. In December 2018 he was appointed on the steering group for the Implementation of the National R&D Strategy. In January 2019 he was appointed as a board member on the foundation for "The Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning". The scope of the foundation is to promote an inclusive approach to education through the development and sharing of open learning and distance education, knowledge, resources, and technologies.



## Prof **Mark G. Borg** Deputy Chairperson

Mark G. Borg is Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Malta. He has served as Head of the Department of Psychology (1996-2000), as Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Education (1997-1999), and as Dean of the same faculty (1999-2003). An educator and academic psychologist by profession, he has been teaching and researching educational psychology and education for over 35 years.

After obtaining a BA in Education from the University of Malta, he continued his studies at the University of Birmingham, from where he obtained his MEd specialising in Educational Psychology in 1983 and a PhD in 1992.

Professor Borg started his teaching career in a primary school and then moved on to the secondary sector teaching Mathematics in a Junior Lyceum. He also served as a part-time lecturer in Educational Psychology before joining the Faculty of Education as a full-time lecturer in 1984.

His seminal research in Maltese settings in the area of educational psychology has been published, and is acknowledged widely. His papers in psychology and education are published in many prestigious, peer-reviewed, specialized journals. He has also presented many papers at various international conferences as well as local ones. His research interests include occupational stress in teaching, stress and anxiety in schoolchildren, school bullying, gender differences in scholastic achievement and coeducation. He has also edited and co-edited the proceedings of two international conferences held in Malta. He currently serves as editorial consultant to the peer-reviewed journal *European Psychologist*.

Professor Borg is a member of all major international

associations in psychology and education including the British Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the American Educational Research Association. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS), a Chartered Psychologist with the BPS, and a Chartered Scientist with the UK Science Council.

He has served as chairperson of the Scientific Committee on various conferences including: The Fourth European Down Syndrome Conference (Malta, 1999), The First Malta International Conference on Autism on the theme Autism: the Challenge of Inclusion (Malta, 2000), and The Association of Teacher Education in Europe 28th Annual Conference (Malta, 2002). Professor Borg has also sat on the International Scientific/Advisory Committee of the Seventh European Congress of Psychology (London, England, 2001), Towards a Knowledge Society: Is Knowledge a Public Good? Dynamics of Knowledge Production and Distribution (Berne, Switzerland, 2007), and the Fifteenth European Congress of Psychology (Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2017).

Professor Borg was the first researcher in Malta to investigate the problem of school bullying. The results of a nation-wide study were instrumental in placing the problem on the national agenda. As a result of this first study a Ministerial Commission on Bullying in Schools was set up between October 1997 and October 2001. The Committee was charged with drawing up a national policy on bullying. A Ministerial Monitoring Committee on Anti-Bullying Services was set up between October 2001 and October 2002. This Committee proposed a national strategy to address the problem including the provision of support services. Professor Borg was a leading member of both Ministerial boards.

He has also served on several national committees including the Ministerial Committee on Inclusive Education and the National Curriculum Council. Professor Borg has been appointed external examiner for PhD theses in psychology and in education as well as local PhD supervisor by several foreign universities. Professor Borg was appointed on the MCAST Board of Governors in 2013 and Deputy Chairperson in 2018.



## Mr **Frank V. Farrugia**

Frank V. Farrugia is owner and managing director of Alphacom Int. Services Co Ltd, a company specialising in the supply of textiles, industrial sewing machines and all related equipment, as well as Alcom Enterprises Co Ltd, which specialises in the supply in of professional tools, all garage equipment, engineering solutions, exhaust extraction systems, industrial maintenance and treatment chemicals, industrial plant and heavy equipment, RO's and water treatment technology. Besides the Maltese market, the group also exports and offers its services to companies in North Africa.

In June 1973, he became a shareholder, partner, and director in the newly formed company Universal Import and Export Ltd. Between 1975 -1991 he occupied the post of Sales and Marketing Director at Universal Import and Export Ltd, Shareholder and Director at Persal Co. Ltd manufacturing hosiery, underwear, and other garments, Shareholder and Director of Saltex Co. Ltd involved in the production of garments for export to the German and Scandinavian market. During this period, he undertook various courses in management, marketing and sales in Malta and also in France, Germany and the Far East.

He joined the Malta Chamber of Commerce in 1976 and has since held various posts, most notably President between 2017-2019. He served on the board of the Building Industry Consultative Council. In his own right, Mr Farrugia was also director of Malta Counter-trade. He also served as President of the Lions Club (Malta) Host.

He was appointed Director of Eurochambers during the 124th Eurochambers Plenary Assembly held in Brussels in October 2018. Eurochambers represents over 20 million businesses in Europe through its 46 member organisations and a European network of 1,700 regional and local Chambers.

He is currently also serving on the board of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, Malta Enterprise, Jobsplus, Employment Industrial Relations, Trade Malta, Tech Malta and is the Vice President of the Libyan Maltese Chamber of Commerce.



## Dr **Amanda Bezzina**

Amanda Bezzina is Head of Department in Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD) at the Ministry for Education and Employment.

She obtained her Bachelor in Education in PSD and Geography from the University of Malta. She proceeded to read for her Master's degree at the same university and focused on Youth and Community Studies. She obtained her PhD from the University of Nottingham, where she focused on holistic education and training and its impact

on well-being, quality of life and employability.

Amanda has been teaching Personal, Social and Career Development for the past twelve years. She has also been a guidance teacher at a secondary school for ten years. For the past ten years, she was the President of the Malta PSD Teachers' Association. In this role, she used to organize a series of conferences focusing on addictions, self-esteem, holistic well-being, sexuality and career development. She also used to assist PSCD teachers in their concerns and needs.

During these years, she worked as a Visiting Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Counselling, the Department of Inclusion and the Department of Youth and Community Studies (Faculty for Social Well-Being) at the University of Malta. She is also a Teaching Practice tutor, a dissertation examiner and a dissertation supervisor. Amanda is a Visiting Lecturer at the Institute of Education designing and delivering lectures on holistic education. Her areas of specialisation include PSCD, youth work, effective teaching strategies, leadership, professional development, holistic education for well-being and employability, formative assessment and teaching skills and strategies.

Her favourite quote is: "Education is Life Itself" (John Dewey). Amanda is married and has two daughters – Arisa and Andrea from whom she learns a lot daily. Amanda is committed to promote holistic education because she strongly believes that education should include skills, values and attitudes besides the knowledge.





## Louisa Grech

Louisa Grech has been a member of the Board of Governors since June 2013. She is a teacher by profession. She obtained her first degree from the University of Malta in 1977 where she specialised in Philosophy and History. In 2006, she obtained her P.G.C.E. and her teacher's warrant. She has taught in various sectors, including a Church School, an International School, the ETC, the initial training courses for LSAs and has given various talks and lectures at the University of Malta.

Louisa Grech is married to Architect Philip Grech, and she is the mother of four children, one of whom passed away at a very young age in a tragic accident. The youngest of the four children was born with Down Syndrome and for these last

27 years, ever since his birth, she has been actively involved in the disability sector. She has formed part of several committees in the disability sector, amongst which were the Down Syndrome Association, the Eden Foundation, Equal Partners and the MFOPD.

She was the editor of the Down Syndrome Association magazine, 'News & Views', for eight years, which magazine was issued once every quarter and addressed any issues, achievements and information relative to Down Syndrome. She was also instrumental in producing and launching, together with other members of the Down Syndrome Association, an information pack for parents of new-borns with Down Syndrome. The pack is in Maltese and English and provides much needed information and guidelines to new parents.

For nearly six years, Louisa Grech was the Executive Manager of Equal Partners Foundation. During this time, besides the management of the Foundation, she attended various conferences both in Malta and abroad, and accompanied persons with disability who were participating in EU projects abroad. She has always been an advocate for inclusion and diversity.

Louisa Grech is also a member of the Core Team of Drachma, and has represented the European Network of Parents of LGBTI at the Council of Europe on a round-table conference to address SOGIESC-based violence in the Education Sector.

Her main interests are her family, classical music, photography, reading, cooking, dance and travelling.



## Marietta Lanzon

Marietta Lanzon has been a member of the Board of Governors of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) since October 2017. She retired as Senior Probation Officer in 2017 after 18 years in the Public Service. She dedicated her entire career helping offenders rehabilitate themselves and decrease their offending.

Ms Lanzon pursued tertiary studies at the University of Malta as a mature student, after raising a family. She holds a Diploma in Gender Studies (Women and Development) and a Diploma

in Probation Services. More recently in 2012, she obtained a Master in Probation Services with a thesis on Community Service in Malta: The Role of the Judiciary.

Following her initial appointment as a Probation Officer in 1999, she was promoted to Senior Probation Officer in 2012, where she was tasked with assisting in the setting up of the Parole Unit in 2013, and consequently with the supervision of its team until her retirement. As part of her work at the Law Courts, she prepared and presented several pre-sentencing and social reports to the Judiciary.

Prior to joining the Public Service, Ms Lanzon worked as a Care Worker at the Programm Fejda, a residential therapeutic programme for adolescent girls with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Among her other activities, she is now involved in a EU project, namely ESP regarding the Transition of Inmates to the Labour Market, a venture between the Corradino Correctional Facility and the University of Malta.

Ms Lanzon is a photography enthusiast, with MQF Level 1 technical competences. Her passion for photography takes her to frequent voyages around the world. She has travelled to Tanzania, Cuba, Singapore, Vietnam and a considerable number of European destinations in order to pursue photographic projects both in the wild and underwater. She is married to a retired banker, with two children, a pharmacist and a lawyer. As a devout grandmother of six grandchildren, two boys and four girls, she enjoys spending time in their joyful company.



## Rhoda Garland

Rhoda Garland was born in the UK. She read for a BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance from Nottingham Trent University before joining the Boots Company Plc in their pharmaceutical division where she worked on the production accounting side of the chemical production for drug manufacturing, whilst she completed her professional accounting examinations. Following her qualification as a Chartered Management Accountant, she worked in various blue-chip companies gaining experience in many sectors including, retail, leisure, security, distribution, insurance and banking. In these roles she gradually moved from accounting to project management and excel modelling, culminating in a contract to produce a 20 year forecasting model for the mortgage and savings books of

a major UK bank.

In search of a new challenge Rhoda moved to Malta in 2006, where she worked in IT, implementing Enterprise Resource Planning systems into small and medium sized businesses in Malta, including the provision of training in SAP ERP software to MCAST Business students.

Rhoda has always had an interest in promoting the rights of disabled people and when the University of Malta introduced a Master's degree in Disability Studies Rhoda enrolled with the first cohort, aiming to provide some academic vigour to her activism work with the NGO Breaking Limits. The research Rhoda undertook in fulfilment of the degree examined the effects of the family, the church and the state on the aspirations of young disabled people in Malta, which included their experiences of education, employment, overprotection and the desire for independence. Following her graduation in 2015, Rhoda left the IT industry and took a contract to research and write the first Maltese State Report to the United Nations concerning the implementation of the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disability which Malta ratified in 2012.

Following the completion of this report Rhoda moved to the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability where she worked on EU Projects before being offered the position of Executive Director. In this role Rhoda is responsible for the smooth running of the Commission, working with the Commissioner on policy and speaking as the representative of CRPD at conferences both locally and internationally.

Rhoda is currently writing a proposal for a PhD related to disability activism and engagement with politics. She also enjoys scuba diving, kayaking and travelling.



## Claire Grima

Claire Grima started representing Malta Enterprise on the MCAST Board of Governors as from May 2018. At Malta Enterprise, her current role is in the development of research and development funding incentives and assistance to enterprises. Additionally, she forms part of the foreign direct investment promotion unit where she focuses on

manufacturing, technology and education sectors with a special focus on research and innovation-driven companies.

Claire obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of Malta's Faculty of Science, studying Chemistry and Biology. She then read for a postgraduate master's degree in Polymer Chemistry from the University of Sheffield in the UK, specialising in patterning of proteins on the nanometric scale for the advancement of research on lab-on-chip devices within the Nanoscale Analytical Science Group.

Claire started her professional experience in quality control and assurance within the pharmaceutical industry. Prior to joining the public sector at Malta Enterprise she also spent several years in the private sector within a multinational global polymer engineering group where she was involved in the formulation, engineering and processing of novel materials for automotive and industrial sealing solutions. She is also Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certified, having led a number of quality improvement projects within the manufacturing environment.

Claire enjoys independent movies and reading, and strives to maintain a balanced life for a healthy mind and body. She also enjoys contact with nature and is a firm believer that environmental sustainability starts with personal responsibility.



## Prof **Joachim James Calleja** Principal (Observer Status)

Professor James Calleja has been involved in vocational education and training since 2001.

Before his appointment as Principal and CEO of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology in June 2018, Mr Calleja was Director of European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) from 2013 to 2018. Before joining Cedefop, he served as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Employment in his native Malta from 2011 to 2013.

In 2005, he was entrusted with the setting up of the Malta Qualifications Council where he served as Chief Executive up to December 2010. He is an Associate Professor and served as Council member of the University of Malta.

Prof Calleja is a graduate of the Universities of Malta, Padua (Italy) and Bradford (UK) from where he obtained his PhD defending a thesis on Kant's political philosophy applied to international education. Since 2001, he is an accredited commercial mediator with CEDR (London). Since 2016 Mr Calleja is Governing Board Member of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications

In 2001, he was appointed Administrative Director of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and in 2004 he moved to the European Training Foundation in Turin. He started his working life at the Foundation for

International Studies of the University of Malta (1986-1995) followed by other upward career moves to the United Nations International Institute on Aging (1995-1998) and to the Ministry of Economic Services Malta (1998-2001). He represented Malta on the European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group, on CEDEFOP's Governing Board and on the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

A prolific writer, Prof Calleja has published books and articles and has edited various publications. He is the co-author of the first Malta Referencing Report of the Malta Qualifications Framework to the EQF and EHEA. He has participated in international events in various countries in Europe, North America, South-East Asia, Australia, Canada, Africa, South Africa, the Middle East and in the Mediterranean region.

# MCAST celebrates



**On** Thursday 2nd May 2019 the College celebrated Diversity Day at MCAST Main Campus by holding various events and activities intended to promote cultural diversity. This year's event was attended by H.E. George Vella, the President of Malta and the chosen motto was #OneLove#OneHeart.

MCAST prides itself on having 682 (10.11%) international students among its population. These students hail from 70 different nationalities from the global rainbow.

H.E. George Vella, the President of Malta spoke about the beauty and importance of diversity in our society. He stated, "Some would be tempted to compare the situation to Babylon. Yet I prefer to compare it to a mosaic of colourful shades and interwoven threads of knowledge, beliefs and preferences. It is a vibrant environment that is beautiful due to the different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences come together as one learning community." The President also congratulated all MCAST international students for their strong academic commitment and for investing their time, money and energies to become the professional leaders of tomorrow. "You should be proud of your choices, especially when considering the difficulties faced while studying and living in a foreign country", he added.

The day started with "The Stories We Share", an Interfaith

Dialogue organised by the International Organisation for Migration in partnership with MCAST. This dialogue explored interfaith awareness towards more inclusive communities with the help of four keynote speakers, Ms Asma Dekna, Dr Damian Spiteri, Fr Aurelio Mulé Stagno, and Mr Bader Zina. During the one hour forum, the audience also had the chance to intervene and share their views and experiences. More than fifty students of different faiths and beliefs or without any religious affiliation participated in the workshops.

After the dialogue the participants had the opportunity to mingle together at the International Village that was organised at Student House by MCAST foreign students and staff. Several nationality booths were set up to display culinary delicacies as well as information about the country and culture. A concert 'World Music Jam' was also held whereby students sang to their traditional songs.

Diversity Day 2019 was a very successful event, which showed the beauty of diversity at the MCAST Campus. As President George Vella stated, "We are one, yet we are many. We share one heart, yet we have the power to generate pulsating interactions and dialogue across the globe... it is an excellent occasion to celebrate diversity and recognize that we are one love, one heart and one human race."



# Diversity Day



#OneLove#OneHeart



“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.”

- MAHATMA GANDHI

# Corporate Governance

By Mr Frederick Schembri  
President of the MCAST Board of Governors



**Corporate** governance is the system of rules, practices and processes by which a legal entity is directed and controlled. It identifies who has power and accountability, and who makes decisions. It is, in essence, a toolkit that enables management and the board to deal more effectively with the challenges of running the institution. Corporate governance ensures that businesses have appropriate decision-making processes and controls in place so that the interests of all stakeholders (shareholders, employees, suppliers, customers and the community) are balanced.

There is never “the perfect way” to set out and build good corporate governance strategy. Rather than prescriptive, it is intended to stimulate thinking on how roles and responsibilities are executed in an efficient and effective manner. Ultimately, it is for individuals and individual boards and offices to decide on governance arrangements most appropriate to the specific circumstances, culture, and needs.

Regardless of the governance code MCAST adopts, we will always place great importance on the clarity of roles and responsibilities, on accountability and transparency, and on independent oversight and supervision. These are necessary for good governance, but they are not sufficient on their own.

The way decisions are taken directly impacts the quality of those decisions. The construction and performance of the Board of Governors, of the Office of the Principal and CEO, and of the Office of the President, must always take into account the technical and professional expertise required to achieve and promote the organization’s vision and purpose.

Good governance is important as it provides the infrastructure to improve the quality of the decisions made by those who manage the business. Good quality, ethical decision-making builds sustainable businesses and enables them to create long-term value more effectively.

## Eight Elements of Good Governance

Good governance has eight major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. Good governance is responsive to the present and future needs of the organization, exercises prudence in policy-setting and decision-making, and sees that the best interests of all stakeholders are taken into account.

### 1. Rule of Law

Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced by an impartial regulatory body, for the full protection of stakeholders.

### 2. Transparency

Transparency means that information should be provided in easily understandable forms and media; that it should be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by governance

policies and practices, as well as the outcomes resulting therefrom; and that any decisions taken and their enforcement are in compliance with established rules and regulations.

### 3. Responsiveness

Good governance requires that organizations and their processes are designed to serve the best interests of stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.

#### **4. Consensus Oriented**

Good governance requires consultation to understand the different interests of stakeholders in order to reach a broad consensus of what is in the best interest of the entire stakeholder group and how this can be achieved in a sustainable and prudent manner.

#### **5. Equity and Inclusiveness**

The organization that provides the opportunity for its stakeholders to maintain, enhance, or generally improve their well-being provides the most compelling message regarding its reason for existence and value to society.

#### **6. Effectiveness and Efficiency**

Good governance means that the processes implemented by the organization to produce favourable results meet the needs of its stakeholders, while making the best use of resources – human, technological, financial, natural and environmental – at its disposal.

#### **7. Accountability**

Accountability is a key tenet of good governance. Who is accountable for what should be documented in policy statements. In general, an organization is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions as well as the applicable rules of law.

#### **8. Participation**

Participation by both men and women, either directly or through legitimate representatives, is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation needs to be informed and organized, including freedom of expression and assiduous concern for the best interests of the organization and society in general.

### **Towards Improved Governance**

Good governance is an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Governance typically involves well-intentioned people who bring their ideas, experiences, preferences and other human strengths and shortcomings to the policy-making table. Good governance is achieved through an on-going discourse that attempts to capture all of the considerations involved in assuring that stakeholder interests are addressed and reflected in policy initiatives.

Ethical leadership is paramount. We want to create a performance culture founded on value creation and risk mitigation. We want to ensure we make well-informed, high-quality, and properly researched decisions based on clear objectives, expounded by the law, to benefit the public, our students, our employees, and their families.

We need to reflect on effective governance. This is a long-term goal with many challenges and requires trust and teamwork. The team must be diverse in composition. This is critical to achieve an organization's effectiveness by bringing different perspectives and experiences around the table to break down "group think", and drive forward the values of accountability, clear communication, integrity, probity, prudence, and fairness as much as humanly possible.

Change does not necessarily bring the most comfort, but it will stretch us to continue working many small miracles every day that change people's lives at MCAST through great education and living up to our values.



# YouNG Goes Further

MCAST's Curriculum Department has been working on the Erasmus+ YouNG Goes Further project together with partners from Slovakia, United Kingdom, Bulgaria and Poland since October 2018.



**The** objectives of this project are to promote enterprise skills among the young people and to develop business partnerships in VET to promote work-based learning. The target groups for YouNG Goes Further project include students with learning difficulties and disabilities; students who are disengaged from general education and NEETs (Not in Employment, Education and Training).

This 30-month project which is still in its first year of operation has already seen partners working together to develop learning and teaching enterprise skills embedded with Key Skills (Mathematics, English, Individual and Social Responsibility, and ICT) as part of the 1st Intellectual Output. These lessons have been piloted with Level 2 and Level 3 students in March and April 2019. Feedback received from students who attended and lecturers who delivered the sessions was encouraging and following this feedback lecturers made

some minor changes to improve the lessons further.

Work on the 2nd Intellectual Output is underway and has so far seen the development of a programme to provide support for vulnerable students. This 8-hour programme on self-esteem, resilience and self-care is being piloted with two groups of students.

Apart from this, future initiatives which are also part of this project include: the development and delivery of training for staff; training business mentors; planning and organising a summer camp for students; and providing students with working opportunities.

Staff from the Curriculum Department have participated in two transnational meetings in Slovakia (October 2018) and United Kingdom (March 2019). In the coming months staff will also participate in a number of peer review events to provide and receive feedback on work done so far.



# MCAST offers Foreign Language Proficiency Courses



**Due** to the ever-increasing globalisation in the working world and the ever-growing international work force in Malta, MCAST launched Language Proficiency courses. The aim of these courses is to offer all students following a course at MCAST the opportunity to learn a foreign language during their free time.

On Friday the 15 March 2019, a good number of students received certificates for successfully completing the MCAST Foreign Language Proficiency courses MQF Level 1 in three different languages: French, German and Italian.

The successful implementation of this programme aimed to target the tertiary level – MCAST’s full time students. A number of MCAST students took the opportunity to learn a foreign language during their free time and successfully completed MQF Level 1.

The students achieving this certificate hailed from the

Institute of Engineering and Transport, the Institute of Information and Communication Technology and the Institute for the Creative Arts (Journalism).

Following this initial training, the students acquired an introduction to extra communication skills in order to enhance their knowledge in communicating effectively with foreigners / students both locally and during their travels. These courses empower MCAST students to be ready for the work force and any upcoming international career.

The spectrum of languages is set to increase. MCAST has already introduced Spanish this year. Chinese will be the next language this programme plans to add to its portfolio, together with the possibilities to reach higher levels – MQF levels 2 and 3.

MCAST students are encouraged to take up these language proficiency courses.

# CPD Sessions in Secondary Schools

During the first term of the academic year 2018/2019, the MCAST Centre for Professional Development was approached by the Maria Regina College, Mosta Secondary School Zokrija and St Ignatius College, Pietà to organise CPD sessions for their teachers and learning support educators.

**Lecturers** from the Learning Support Unit (LSU), within the Curriculum Department, prepared and delivered five distinct workshop sessions focusing on: challenging behaviours, inclusion, the teacher as a role model, pastoral care, and literacy for students with dyslexia. These programmes were held over two days at Mosta Secondary School.

These were followed by another session at St Ignatius College, Pietà, where LSU lecturers prepared and delivered a workshop which focused on innovative assessment methods targeting secondary school teachers teaching practical subjects.

During these workshops, participants had the opportunity to engage in discussions leading to the sharing of good practices and the adaptation of new practices according to their specific needs. Feedback from both secondary schools was very positive, and the MCAST Centre for Professional Development will continue to enhance collaboration with other education institutions to promote good practices in education. The Centre will continue to strive for professional growth with the conviction that this leads to staff empowerment and an engaging learning experience for students.

## More Support provided to MCAST Students

**The** Learning Support Unit within the Curriculum Department was active in providing support to a significant number of MCAST students who either requested support on their own or were referred by lecturers for additional support in key skills, the most popular being Mathematics, English and Maltese. Some students were also supported in time management, organisation skills and assignment planning.

Once again, the Unit organised the delivery of Maltese as a Foreign Language to all non-Maltese speaking students who have Maltese as part of their qualification. The unit brought to a successful conclusion the Erasmus+ project 3E's for Youths in VET: Engagement, Empowerment, Employability which targeted youths facing difficulties in furthering their education due to social, emotional and psychological issues.

# MCAST Well-being Hub

## Therapy Services

In counselling and therapy you can deal with personal problems and life situations that are negatively affecting you. Whatever life offers you, you have the power to positively manage your own life and to take your own decisions.



2398 7188



counsellors@ MCAST.edu.mt

## Addiction Related Issues

Addictions such as those regarding drugs, alcohol and gambling often have serious consequences on a person's life. Sedqa and MCAST are collaborating to offer individual prevention sessions to support students and staff who are facing such issues.



2398 7188

mt



substanceissues@ MCAST.edu.mt

## Mental Health Services

Life presents many difficulties which may impact one's mental health. The Mental Health Department will be offering their services to both students and staff. When referral is made to this service, there will be an initial review by a Support Services team practitioner.



2398 7188



counsellors@ MCAST.edu.mt

Outreach talks, awareness sessions, seminars and alternative activities will also be conducted by all the above services.

## Nutritional Advice

The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate is providing the services of a Nutritionist who will offer both students and staff individual sessions during which one will be able to acquire information about improved food choices, nutritional facts about food, one's BMI and advice about losing weight in a healthy manner.



2398 7188



nutrition@ MCAST.edu.mt

## Tobacco Cessation Support

The Health Promotion and Disease Directorate is giving students and staff the opportunity to benefit from free confidential individual smoking cessation services at the MCAST Main Campus. The tobacco cessation adviser will address your smoking trends and help you stop smoking in a planned manner for a better and healthier lifestyle.



2398 7188

mt



tobaccocessation@ MCAST.edu.mt

## Sexual Health Services

The Sexual Health Clinic will provide discreet and confidential advice to students and staff about sexual health, treatment available, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, vaccines and referral to the Genitourinary Clinic for testing and counselling.



2398 7188



sexualhealth@ MCAST.edu.mt

# Vuxenutbildning, Axcis Education, Eskobar & Högskolan i Skövde & the University of Skövde – ERASMUS+ VET MOBILITY PLACEMENT IN SWEDEN



Erasmus+

Ms Charla Pia Vella, Gozo Campus Institute Vocational Coordinator and ICT Lecturer and Mr Shaun Borg, Learning Support Educator, recently participated in an Erasmus+ mobility to Sweden. They visited Adult Education branches in Skövde and also the University of Skövde, the latter being a first-class research environment in games at the intersection of media and information technology.

**The** course that was delivered at the SISSA Laboratories in Trieste (Italy) demonstrated how STEM/STEAM could effectively be used to motivate young learners into considering STEAM careers within their future. The rationale behind this course is that employers are not always managing to find individuals that possess the necessary skill set to certain careers.

During the course of their mobility, Ms Vella and Mr Borg had the opportunity to job shadow and evaluate the education system structures and teaching methods in various Adult Education Branches in Skövde. Their visit to the University of Skövde also gave them an insight of how students, through first class research and close collaboration with the industry, are prepared to meet industry demands. The University of Skövde collaborates closely with the business community to facilitate students to choose their career paths.

Ms Vella and Mr Borg were invited to job shadow Ms Jessica Arvidsson and Ms Camille Settergren, both special

education teachers for students at Lärvox. Lärvox is the municipality's name for a school in special education for adults (adults with learning disabilities). The aim is to support and encourage adults with an intellectual disability or acquired brain injury to better their social life and develop as a working person.

Teaching at Lärvox is tailored to the respective abilities and skills of every student. This gives the student an opportunity to better develop their skills to solve problems in everyday life and within their community. This individual tutorial method of learning is done through the use of high-tech or low-tech resources, without following a time-constrained curriculum. The inclusive education being implemented is based on a freedom of choice of learning (individual versus group-based), progress reports instead of assessment methods, and self-empowerment of students before all other academic skills are adopted.

On the other hand, the University of Skövde is one of the most specialized universities in Sweden. Research is conducted in five areas: Informatics, System Biology, Virtual Systems, Health and Learning, and Enterprises for the future. The University provides a first-class research environment and it works in close collaboration with the industry to address the industry's needs and facilitate employability. Its main aim is to empower students and engage them in decision-making affecting their future. In this way the students get exposed to international and local companies. All this is done through mentorship programmes, advisory boards, guest lectures, degree projects, job fairs and other similar programmes.

Another prominent feature at the University of Skövde is the Gothia Science Park (GSP) that is a business incubator which helps students realize their ideas and go into start-up ventures. It is worth knowing that the Game Incubator at



GSP is the world leading talent factory in the field of computer games development.

Ms Vella attended informal meetings with professors and lecturers teaching Computer Games Development at the University's School of Informatics. During these meetings, lecturers explained how various concepts in the research field and digital technologies are increasingly being incorporated within museums and cultural heritage sites to enhance visitors' experiences beyond the traditional exhibition design. Among the initiatives on board, a special app was created where players can scan and actively learn more about fairy tale characters found in books.

During their mobility, Ms Vella and Mr Borg were also invited to a language lecture by Ms Hanna Mellgren. Students were given a book to read during the week and then they were asked to discuss and evaluate, in groups, the story protagonists, their characters and the meaning of the story. Such an approach definitely encourages students to speak and improve their communication and presentation skills. Such practices can be adopted at MCAST to improve our own students' spoken language and communication skills in both Maltese and English.

Mr Borg also visited Axcis Education and Eskobar Institutions, that specialise in training persons with special needs to be proficient in daily living tasks and jobs in the catering, accounting, janitorial and recycling sectors. Both institutions liaise with the business community which employs successfully trained participants on a full and/or part time basis. Axcis Education is supported by Swedish legislation. It has four main branches (depending on the type of job being aimed for) and each branch has its own specialised extension dedicated to more individualised training for persons with more acute needs. These extensions were created in order to facilitate entry into the Axcis Education Institution for persons with more severe disabilities.

Eskobar (one of these extensions) focuses more on personalised daily activities for people with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome. Emphasis is given on cleanliness, order, preparation, routine and structure (mainly colour coding and labelling with large and clear words). Every staff member is an expert in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and in the strategies of working with persons with ASD. It is worth noting that each room at the institution has its own function and each task in each room has a clear start and finish that the student completes with the help of a personalised journal (eliminating verbal prompting or unnecessary assistance from other



persons). The student measures his or her progress via stickers that are put into his/her personal daily schedule (in his/her private room and in each room pertaining to the tasks which he/she has planned for the day).

Such strategies can be very effective for assistance and inclusion (within classrooms and on campus) for students with special needs, as well as for improving organisational, time-keeping and overall general knowledge/skills for students who do not have any special needs. Simple knowledge and assessment tools, such as unconditional positive regard, and the Iceberg Analogy (entailing that every negative action/behaviour has a deep, underlying reason behind it) can be implemented during lectures and other activities, in order to grasp a better understanding of the students' aspirations and come up with more effective and efficient solutions.

This mobility was definitely a positive experience for Ms Vella and Mr Borg. It added value to their teaching/learning experience acquired in the local context at MCAST. The practices, concepts and ideas acquired from this experience will be shared with their peers to improve our own students' learning experience.

ERASMUS + MOBILITY IN TAEKNISKOLINN - REYKJAVIK (ICELAND)

## The experience of two staff members from the Gozo Campus

In April 2019, MCAST Gozo Campus Director Ing. Godwin Grech and Institute Student Support Services Coordinator Mr Matthew Xuereb had the opportunity to visit the Technical College in Reykjavik and observe at first-hand how this vocational college, consisting of several schools offering a number of study programmes, operates.





**During** this mobility Ing. Grech and Mr Xuereb had the opportunity to acquire a very good insight of vocational and technical education and training in a vocational college in a European island state on the northern verge of the continent and compare and contrast them with our VET provision and framework in Malta, a smaller island state with a larger population on the southern end of Europe.

The mobility covered important aspects such as curriculum development, provision of training programmes (day and evening/adult courses), delivery methods and approaches, assessment methods, quality assurance as well as student support services. A very detailed overview of the training facilities in the various schools/departments that constitute this technical college was also given, including the school of navigation which has state of the art navigation simulators. Worth noting is the exposure that was given with regards to the innovative Project-Based learning approach – that comprises a mix of blended learning, practical projects (to be completed before taking the formal assessments) and the assessments (written and practical) – that is being spearheaded by the college's school of electrical technology and electronics. This school is also taking measures to encourage the use of technology in teaching and learning through the free distribution of iPads to lecturers expressing interest to be involved in such initiatives. Lecturers are encouraged to record and produce video lectures/tutorials which are available to students online. Students are expected to view these recorded sessions at home, prior to attending for specific classroom lectures/practical sessions. This approach puts a considerable responsibility on the students – it was not easy to implement at first and was initially resisted both by the lecturing staff as well as the students. Other schools/departments within Taekniskolinn are actually still sceptical about how it can be implemented in their respective courses. The ultimate aim of PBL is to enable students to acquire a

holistic understanding of the vocational area and linking/ connecting the different vocational units together to prepare them well for real world scenarios and work situations, rather than preparing them for individual unit assessments in a detached fashion.

The mobility provided a first-hand experience of the concepts of the Future Classroom Lab and Maker Space in action. The idea is to move away from several confined classrooms and have an open working space for students and academic staff members to mix and work together. Ing. Grech and Mr Xuereb observed other classroom and workshop/practical sessions in IT and engineering. Informal talks with members of staff and students were also held to compare the respective practices.

Meetings with the Taekniskolinn's Student Support Services officials, namely the two counsellors and the resident psychologist, were held to discuss the college's support structures for students, parents/guardians and staff members alike. Ideas were shared and discussed. The respective support structures for students with psycho-social needs and the importance of a strong referral system were also discussed whilst comparing respective approaches being taken to follow students up with the aim of retaining them in their studies. Other matters discussed were self-harm, social media and excessive gaming, cyber bullying, lack of sleep, anxiety, depression, isolation, family issues, communication and social skills. These discussions were indeed an excellent CPD opportunity and fulfilled the sharing of good practices objectives of such mobilities.

Higher level studies and/or employment/career progression pathways (including business start-ups after completing the master craftsmanship programme) available to students studying in different vocational areas, were also discussed. A visit to a geothermal energy plant fulfilled the industrial training objective related to renewable energies and green technologies. Overall, this mobility to Taekniskolinn - Reykjavik proved to be a very enriching experience to both participants.



# MCAST Gozo Campus students' participation in enrichment events hosted by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh

A number of students following courses at MQF Levels 4, 5 and 6 participated in three events, namely, Polifest, Eurodesk – Ahoy! All aboard and #GiveAVote Campaign.

## #giveavote Campaign

While the EU has a huge impact on young people's lives, only 28% of young voters participated in the 2014 EU Elections – the lowest turnout of any age group. #GiveAVote campaign was a challenge to young people – to help them make the connection between the many things they care about and the EU's power to help achieve those objectives. In this way, the campaign aimed to mobilise young people across the EU to vote in the May 2019 EP elections, to ensure that the youth's interests are high on the European Parliament's agenda for the next five years. This was particularly important this year when sixteen year olds voted for the first time in Malta.

This campaign was completely neutral and its sole aim was to encourage young people to cast an informed vote on the 25th May 2019 at both local and European Elections. The campaign was not aligned with or supported by any political party and had no intention to support any political party.

This event was held at the MCAST Gozo Campus's conference hall. The students had the opportunity to benefit from a simulation of the voting procedure. The event was carried out in collaboration with the European Parliament Liaison Office in Malta and Aġenzija Żgħażaġh.

## Polifest

Polifest, a project celebrating youth participation, is made up of 12 national youth activities coinciding with 12 UN international days such as International Youth Day, International Day of Democracy and NGO's Day amongst others.

The main aim of Polifest is to enhance the dialogue between young people and policy makers. During such discussions, related to the different UN themes, young people formulate a set of policy recommendations that will eventually be presented to policy makers.

On the occasion of the UN International Day of Happiness (the United Nations deems happiness a fundamental human goal that, in itself, necessitates an inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth to promote the happiness and well-being of all), Polifest convened in Gozo.

A number of students from MCAST Gozo Campus participated in this event held at the Calypso Hotel in Marsalforn. It was inevitable that during the workshops that focused mainly on inclusion, access, empowerment and participation, the students fervently discussed those issues closest to their realities as young people living in a geographically disadvantaged region, due to Gozo's double insularity. The positive outcomes of this Polifest event in Gozo, will now be added to the contributions emanating from the other Polifest workshops in the presentation of Polifest final recommendations.

## Eurodesk Activity – Ahoy! All aboard

Through the 'Ahoy! All aboard' activity, awareness was raised on learning mobility opportunities and young people were encouraged to become active citizens. Eurodesk is the main source of youth information on European policies, mobility information and opportunities. It answers enquiries and provides guidance for mobile young people across Europe.

This event consisted of an enjoyable boat ride from Sliema to St Paul's Island and back on a sunny morning. The students were given goody bags containing information about Eurodesk and Aġenzija Żgħażaġh including the benefits of the European Youth Card.





## BELGIUM STUDY EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

## Coming out of my shell

by Roberta Micallef, Journalism Student

Journalism student Roberta Micallef travelled to Hasselt, Belgium for her Erasmus+ study exchange at Hogeschool PXL for four months during the Autumn semester 2018. She successfully completed 34 ECTS of studies, which will be part of her MCAST degree. This study exchange was made possible through an inter-institutional agreement between MCAST and PXL, and Roberta received a grant from the Erasmus+ Programme to cover her extra expenses during her stay abroad. Let us hear about Roberta's experience in her own words and photos:

**“My** experience on Erasmus was an immensely positive one. Besides the amount of new people from new places I got a chance to meet, and the ever exciting possibility of travel within Central Europe, this was an experience that threw me at the deep end. I had to push myself out of my comfort zone. Confidence in social situations was a quality I did not think much about before I was in a situation where I was alone and where no one knew me.

It is so easy to disappear in a community of international students, that are all eager to gain as much as they can from their Erasmus experience – friendships... travel. It is easy to feel uncomfortable and vulnerable. Something I learnt was that no matter where you come from or how different your culture is, we all have the capability of understanding one another, of telling someone you like their outfit, of asking questions, pushing yourself. I promise no one will think you are strange. That second of discomfort in retrospect will be so much better than staying in your dorm watching Netflix for 6 months. If anything, it will definitely teach you more!

The unfamiliar place and the unfamiliar faces encouraged me to adapt and change in the most positive of ways... the curriculum in and of itself was an example of this. From a basic understanding of Dutch to film projects on local businesses... my very foreign self, quickly felt not so foreign anymore.

Hasselt became another place to call home, and luckily, because of this experience and the people I have met, home is available to me in Alabama, Milan, Moscow, Vienna and Barcelona.”



## FINLAND MOBILITY EXPERIENCE

# New opportunities ahead

by Dorianne Cachia, Lecturer Applied Sciences



During the month of March 2019 Applied Sciences lecturer Dorianne Cachia had the opportunity to participate in a mobility experience at the YA! - Vocational College of Ostrobothnia in Vaasa, Finland.



**Ms** Cachia had the chance to view and discuss the nursing curriculum in Finland and afterwards compare, review and reflect on MCAST's own nursing curriculum. She also had the opportunity to observe lectures and practical sessions delivered in class. Dorianne noted that lecturers encourage independent learning at home prior to covering the topic in class so that students will then actively participate in the class discussion that follows. Students are also encouraged to learn through innovative learning by means of specific IT applications of virtual reality. A robot system has also been recently introduced in the nursing field and students are encouraged to observe the therapeutic effect this robot had on specific patients.

This international mobility has created the opportunity for further collaboration between the two Colleges, whereby MCAST nursing students will be given the chance to participate in further Erasmus exchange programmes with Ya! Institute.

## OUTREACH

# Fostering Vocational Education at MCAST



**Throughout** this academic year, the Institute of Information and Communication Technology hosted seven Boot Camp sessions with Middle School Colleges. The Boot Camp sessions were coordinated by Mr Silvio Nocilla and Mr Paul Pulis in collaboration with Mr Conrad Vassallo, the IICT Director and Ms Daniela Zerafa, Educational Officer for ICT Vocational Educational Training (ICTVET) within MEDE.

The objective of the Boot Camp sessions is to reach out to Form 2 and Form 3 students attending Middle School compulsory education with the aim of providing an opportunity to develop insights and positive perception on Vocational Education through first-hand experience offered at MCAST.

Middle Schools Colleges were invited at the Institute of ICT for a half-day workshop to practise the baseline concepts of HTML5 and CSS3. The final outcome of such lessons was for the students to create a customized webpage built on their areas of interest. Students reacted positively to this experience and the demand for more Boot Camp sessions has increased. Middle School Colleges who

participated for the Boot Camp sessions were:

- St Benedict College Middle School, Kirkop
- Mater Boni Consilii St Joseph School, Paola
- St Patrick's Salesian School, Sliema
- Stella Maris College Middle Schools, Gzira
- St Theresa Middle School, Birkirkara
- Maria Regina Middle School, Naxxar

This experience showed that students are ready to engage in vocational education as their route for learning and are more than willing to continue developing their skills, competences and knowledge by choosing this path, not as an alternative route but because the choice is related to their interests.

Digital Media Boot Camp sessions are planned to be introduced as from the coming academic year. We are looking forward to reaching out to other Middle School Colleges to increase students' interest in Vocational Education.



THE MASON BEE OSMA LATREILLEI ON CORN MARIGOLD

## Research project about agriculture biodiversity and land use systems in the Mediterranean region

by Leticia De Santis & Mario V Balzan



**Throughout** history, land use dynamics across the Mediterranean Basin has largely shaped our environment. This continues to be the case today as we modify our landscapes according to the ever evolving societal demands and needs. In some cases, land uses are changing as a consequence of the abandonment of agriculture or, at the other end of the spectrum, its intensification as agricultural fields are merged into bigger ones for an increased focus on production. Across the Mediterranean, with an increased demand to accommodate for growing cities, roads and other grey infrastructure, urbanisation is also a key phenomenon.

These land use dynamics may all be observed to varying extents in Malta and, in some cases, are exacerbated by the

limited availability of our land resources.

Agriculture areas form valuable components of Malta's landscape; a component that is directly and indirectly used by a growing population of locals and visitors. Our rural areas also play a significant role in maintaining biodiversity in our landscapes whilst at the same time contributing to food production and security to many families at local and national scales.

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has recently hosted the 2nd annual meeting of the DIVERCROP ("Land Systems Dynamics in the Mediterranean Basin across Scales as Relevant Indicator for Species Diversity and Local Food Systems") project. The DIVERCROP project aims to highlight interactions between current



dynamics of the Mediterranean agricultural practices, agricultural biodiversity and local food systems at multiple spatial scales. DIVERCROP is funded by the Malta Council for Science and Technology through the ArimNet2 Joint Initiative of Member States, Associated Countries and Mediterranean Partner Countries.

During the DIVERCROP project a number of case studies on agricultural land use and food system dynamics across the Mediterranean have been developed. The Maltese case study, and other case studies from partner countries in North Africa and Southern Europe, were presented during the DIVERCROP Annual Meeting, held at MCAST.

From Malta, a case study was developed through participatory processes with farmers, policymakers and stakeholders which identifies the characteristics of the local farm systems. The role of national and European funding, cooperation between stakeholders, agricultural innovation and its uptake, competition with imported food products and consumer preference to local food, were all identified as being key drivers impacting on food systems.

At the same time, the role of agriculture in supporting biodiversity is being assessed through land use modelling and statistical approaches. One of the key objectives of the Maltese case study is to analyse the relationships between land use systems and food production and the contribution to biodiversity. During this project, researchers from the MCAST Institute of Applied Sciences looked at the impact of land use on plant and bee diversity in agricultural landscapes.

MCAST's Applied Environmental Sciences Research Group is the participating partner in DIVERCROP. The research group works with practitioners in environmental sciences that have broad industry experience and provides a platform for students to do research in various environmental fields.

*Dr Mario Balzan is the DIVERCROP project's Principal Investigator and a Senior Lecturer at the MCAST Institute of Applied Sciences. Leticia de Santis's a Master of Research student and a researcher at the MCAST Institute of Applied Sciences.*

## MCAST lecturer attends European Urban Green Infrastructure Conference

On the 10th and 11th April 2019, Dr Mario Balzan presented the EU-funded Horizon 2020 ReNature project to the participants of the 3rd European Urban Green Infrastructure Conference, which was held in London and was hosted by The Bartlett, UCL and Loughborough University London. The objectives of providing opportunities for capacity-building and networking for research excellence in green infrastructure and nature-based solutions were presented in the plenary session.

**Dr** Balzan also presented research results about biodiversity and green infrastructure mapping in Malta, and led a workshop about the use of indicators for monitoring the effectiveness of nature-based solutions in urban areas.

More information about ReNature can be obtained from: <http://renature-project.eu/>.

# ‘Mument Misruq’ wins Best Picture at the Malta Youth Film Festival

Shaun Vella, third year student following a degree in Media at the Institute for the Creative Arts, won the Best Picture Award, Audience Awareness Award and Best Storytelling Award, at the second edition of the Malta Youth Film Festival for his film ‘Mument Misruq’. Shaun Vella also won a prize of €500 and a trip to Tromsø, Norway for the Nordic Youth Film Festival at the end of June.

**When** asked how he felt as this year’s winner of this prestigious award, Shaun exclaimed that hard work pays off. Shaun exclaimed, “This project started out as a school assignment, going through to the production process of finding interesting and unique stories to building up a finished documentary. Unfortunately, the feedback outcome of this was not as desired. Fast forward 6 months At the back of my mind I always believed I had a unique and interesting story that I could share, however I did not know in what way I could deliver this story into a documentary. Being persistent and passionate, knowing that applications are open for this festival, I decided to go back to the drawing boards, evaluate past feedback and amend accordingly to ensure that i had an interesting story together with a high production value. A couple of months later, I unexpectedly won three awards.”

Whilst in Norway, Shaun will be attending workshops and meetings and will work together with other international young filmmakers. “I’m looking forward to create more interesting content and work on ambitious



interesting projects.”

The award night of the Malta Youth Film Festival was held on Friday 31st May 2019 at the Youth Village in St. Venera. The call was issued last April. There were 14 entries for this year’s edition, consisting of various genres.

The event was organised by the Malta Film Foundation and Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and was supported by Arts Council Malta through the Cultural Partnership Agreement, the Malta Film Commission and the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sport and Voluntary Organisations.

# MCAST student to participate in Matera Residency Project



**Avantech** Ltd and MCAST are pleased to announce that Marika Buhagiar, a 2nd year photography student at MCAST, together with photography lecturer Therese Debono will be attending a fully sponsored 8-day residency project in Matera this summer.

With Matera being the European Capital of Culture for 2019, Canon Europe have this year launched a Matera Residency Project open to students in the 28 ECOC participating countries. Avantech Limited, local Canon distributors, offered this opportunity to all students following the Photography and Fine Arts course at the Institute for the Creative Arts in Mosta.

The students were requested to submit a portfolio of their work including a series of 5 to 15 documentary images together with a summary of the documentary

being presented. A total of 17 submissions were received, out of which 3 finalists were shortlisted by a panel of 3 independent judges. The work of the 3 finalists was then submitted to Canon Europe for the final adjudication.

The Residency Programme is entirely sponsored by Canon with the aim of developing an international exhibition initiative to produce and showcase the work of students and teachers from selected European Media Schools. The project will give students and tutors the opportunity to collaborate on the production of an exhibition where a selected group of young photographers will extend the single moment captured in their frame for a perennial memory to be exhibited in the summer of 2019, and then offered to the archive of the city.

# Signature Guides for the Blind



**Money** and Signature Guides are used by members of the Malta Society for the Blind in order to distinguish the different values of the Euro bank notes. Bank notes vary in width according to their value, so the steps shown on the periphery of the template will guide the blind to identify the value of the bank note. Also, the recess in the middle of the template will serve as a guide for the signature space on the cheque books.

Students at foundation level from the Institute of Engineering and Transport have produced a good number of these templates as part of their training in Basic Mechanical Engineering Techniques. The skills required to produce these templates are much higher than those expected from students at this level, but with the dedicated assistance of the respective lecturers these were machined to a high standard of accuracy.

The Institute of Engineering and Transport is always actively seeking to generate ideas to support societies and organisations with special needs.

The activity was coordinated by Mr Donald Stevens. Lecturers Mr Edward Gauci Borda and Mr Charles O'Brien together with a group of students were present for this presentation.



▲ The templates were presented to the Society on the 4th of April, 2019 by the Principal and CEO of the College, Professor Joachim James Calleja, the Deputy Principal Dr Mario Cardona.



# Meet the MCAST Maintenance Team



## Saviour Grech

PRECINCTS MANAGER

### When did you join MCAST?

I joined MCAST in 2001 as an Officer. I was then promoted to Manager. I have been involved in all works related to maintenance and I am proud to say that I have seen the College grow into what it is today.

### What was your proudest moment at MCAST?

I am proud of every opportunity and project that I have worked on at MCAST since 2001. I am also very proud of my excellent team... both on a professional and personal level. Their dedication, commitment and enthusiasm make me proud!

### Why do you think your role is important?

I believe that when you work in a team everybody's role is important. Without my team I would not have been able to carry out most of the projects successfully.

### What are some of the challenges you find when working in this sector?

There are many challenges including deadlines and the long and tedious procedure of buying materials in a short amount of time. Yet we are working on finding solutions!

## Sebastian Formosa

### What is your role at MCAST?

I have been at MCAST 16 years now. I started working at the Maritime Institute and was responsible for the general upkeep of the building as well as the smooth running of the fire engine and boat. After that I worked as a messenger at Administration and also as a farmer at the MCAST Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences, feeding and looking after the chickens, rabbits and also the fields.

### What are some of the challenges you find when working in this sector?

I feel that our team is small for the amount of work to be done at the College. Yet we are a strong team and when we work together, we manage.

### What was your proudest moment at MCAST?

I feel very proud and satisfied when I remember the six years I spent working at the Maritime Institute. The students gave me great satisfaction and they still acknowledge me when they see me outside.

## Pierre Bonello

ELECTRICIAN NOMINATED FINALIST - WORKER OF THE YEAR

### Why do you think your role is important?

I am responsible for installing, maintaining and repairing electrical control, wiring, and lighting systems, inspecting transformers and circuit breakers and troubleshooting electrical issues. I am also responsible for repairing equipment. I feel that my job is extremely important for the running of the College. I am very happy here, very proud of the work I carry out.

### What are some of the challenges you find when working in this sector?

Power cuts are my biggest challenge!

## Charlie Cassar

### What is your role at MCAST?

This is my third year at MCAST. I am part of the maintenance team mainly responsible for construction projects. I carry out construction works at the MCAST Campus. I feel that I am treated very well by management and am very happy to be part of this team.

### What are some of the challenges you find when working in this sector?

My biggest challenge is the lack of transport as twelve of us share a vehicle which can be daunting at times! Yet I have been informed that management is working to solve this issue.

## Edward Bugeja

### What is your role at MCAST?

I have been employed at MCAST since 2001. I started off at the Institute for the Creative Arts, which I loved especially since I am fascinated by art in general and enjoyed working in such a creative environment. I worked on general maintenance and was greatly involved in setting up the annual art exhibitions. I enjoyed working with management and also with the students. Eleven years ago I went through a terrible time, having lost my home together with all my belongings. After this trauma I needed a change and started working at the MCAST Naxxar Campus. I enjoyed working in a new environment, meeting new people and always looking at life positively!

### What was the proudest moment of your experience at MCAST?

Assisting the students and staff in setting up the annual art exhibitions were very satisfying moments for me. I feel very proud to have been part of the events and happy to feel appreciated for the work I carried out.

## Fabian Cauchi

### What is your role?

This is my sixteenth year at MCAST. I form part of the maintenance team and am mainly responsible for carrying out plumbing works. Before MCAST I was employed as a pipefitter with Malta Shipbuilding.

### What are some of the challenges you find when working in this sector?

The procurement of material to work with is the biggest challenge I face.

## Anthony Abela

### What was your proudest moment at MCAST?

There has not been one moment in particular but I am proud of all the work that I have carried out. I feel proud to be part of the MCAST maintenance team!

### What are some of the challenges you find when working in this sector?

Sometimes building in general can be difficult yet we are a great team and work well together!

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## Marco Mifsud

### What is your role?

I started working at MCAST in 2001. Prior to this I was employed at the Malta Shipbuilding as a carpenter. At MCAST I joined the maintenance team and occupy the role of carpenter. I have carried out several carpentry jobs including over 700 doors for different MCAST buildings including the Library and Learning Resource Centre, the Institute of Community Services building, Administration and also the Gozo Campus.

I am very proud to be one of the carpenters here at MCAST and feel very satisfied with the work that I have carried out. I take great pride in my work and make sure to give importance to detail!

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## Alfred Bugeja

### Mention your greatest achievement at MCAST

This is my sixteenth year at MCAST as part of the Maintenance Team working in steel fabrication and welding. I feel that my greatest achievement at MCAST is the work I carried out in the Administration Hall. I am proud to say that I carried out all the iron works at the hall. Besides this I also worked on all the railings, gates and desks. I feel very grateful for this opportunity.

## Julian Gatt

### What is your role?

I have been employed at MCAST for almost 3 years. Before I used to work at Trelleborg as a machine operator and now I am part of the maintenance team responsible for plumbing and general maintenance of the MCAST Campus. I feel very proud to be part of this team as the work is challenging and I feel that through it I am continuously learning new skills. I am grateful for this opportunity.

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## Felix Farrugia

### What is your role?

In 2001 I started working at MCAST on loan from Malta Shipbuilding. I spent 13 years at Malta Shipbuilding as a tradesman working on the furniture for ships. At MCAST I am a senior tradesman focusing on carpentry, working mostly on office furniture, apertures and kitchens.

### What is your greatest achievement at MCAST?

I am very proud of all the carpentry work that I have done over the past 18 years. I am proud to say that I have been involved in supplying the College with most of its furniture, doors and kitchens. Looking at the completed projects gives me immense satisfaction. Since I am also the president of the Malta Rabbit Club I am also very proud that I have been instrumental in forming an agreement between this club and the MCAST Centre for Agriculture, Aquatics and Animal Sciences. Through this agreement students now have the opportunity to carry out hands-on training with different rabbit breeders.

THE EDGE

# Internal Verification

by Jacqueline Micallef Grimaud

Over the years, MCAST has developed and implemented an overarching College Quality Framework. In line with the findings of a study carried out by Warrington and Wilmut in 2001, this calls for “a sophisticated structure designed to create a quality loop based on a continuous link between specification of standards, implementation of standards, monitoring, review/evaluation, and recommendations for amended stipulations.”



**Quality** assurance is, thereby, driven by what academics and college management describe as a “feedback and feedforward” impetus (Ferrell, 2012), where conventional feedback inherently focuses on past performance and feeds back advice to the individual on a past activity, while feeding forward is future focused, emphasising the individual’s potential and their development in the future (Hirsch, 2017).

To this end and in line with National Quality Assurance Framework requirements stipulated by the NCFHE, a number of measures to gauge and assure quality have been generated at MCAST; amongst others, the documentation of processes in the form of standard operating procedures and the internal audits within and across its providing institutions, as well as corporate internal audits where the marine and aviation sectors are concerned. The findings of the audits, recorded in a number of reports between 2012/2019, were garnered from secondary and primary research. According to the accepted praxis, the former reviewed literature and current practices prior to setting objectives to satisfy the latter, which was, in turn, addressed through the review of documentation

produced by the providing institutions and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, including interviews with management, administrative staff and academics, as well as focus groups with students.

In line with the results of the Warrington and Wilmut study, internal verification was identified as a key element of the MCAST College Quality Framework. This was reinforced by a request for continuous professional development in internal verification, to which end a course was designed, the first run of which was delivered in the first quarter of 2019. This element is intrinsic to MCAST College practices, contributing to the rigour and robustness of its assessment processes, thereby giving the College a competitive edge within the education industry if dynamically and soundly developed.

## Lead Internal Verification System

The foregoing scenario highlighted the need for a lead internal verification process, once again supported by Warrington and Wilmut, who found that “as total quality management systems begin to develop in colleges and

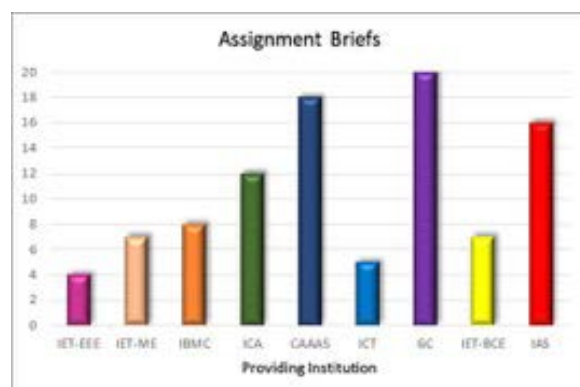


elsewhere, lead verifiers, having a broad and specific responsibility for quality assurance, appear to be emerging.” The outcomes of this study resonated deeply with the Lead Internal Verification (LIV) System undertaken by MCAST, since it was felt that:

- The LIV system gave due prominence to the importance of IV to quality provision.
- The peripatetic nature of the LIV system enabled consistent support for assessors.
- Models of good practice could be identified and disseminated.
- LIVs were an important strand in making assessors feel part of a community of practice.
- LIVs were valued for playing a mediating role in achieving coherence of standards.
- The LIV system was proof of the rigour of the process.
- Standards improved markedly because of LIVs.

### Lead Internal Verification Process

In line with MCAST strategic quality measures, Lead Internal Verification practices were triggered during the academic year 2018/2019. Providing institutions were requested to forward hard or soft copies of all documentation related to the assessment/internal verification process of randomly sampled units from each level offered by the institute/centre, from the drafting of the assignment brief to the assessor’s/internal verifier’s decisions on the former and assessed student work. In total, 93 unit samples, 28 of which included assessment decisions, were submitted to the Lead Internal Verifier.

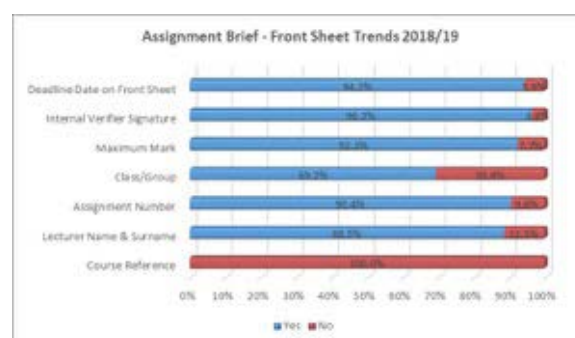
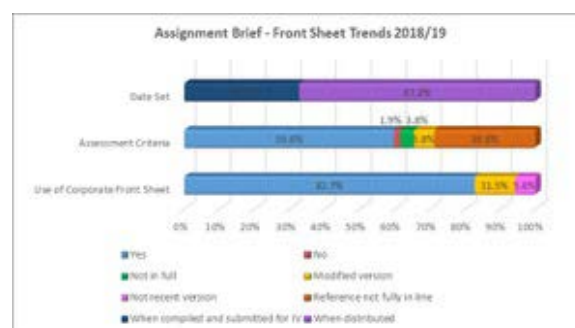


### Lead Internal Verification Findings

Following the lead internal verification process, which, in some cases, generated proactive meetings with management, lecturers, IVCs and IVs involved, feedback reports were produced and issued to the relevant institute/centre

management concerned in an ongoing process for further discussion with the lecturer/s concerned and dissemination of good practice outlined therein amongst all academic staff.

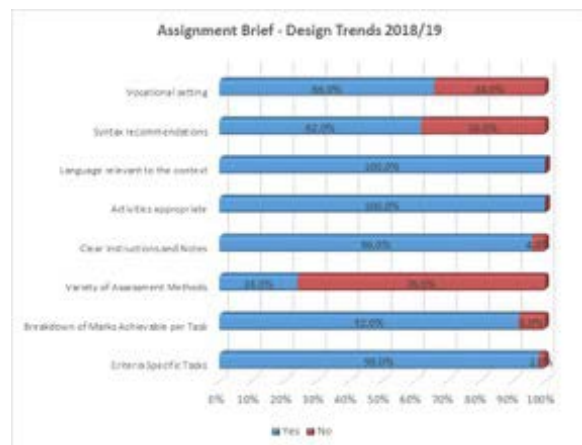
On analysing the findings, it may be concluded that a number of quality practices were predominant. For example, the first aspect analysed was the use and compilation of the corporate front sheet.



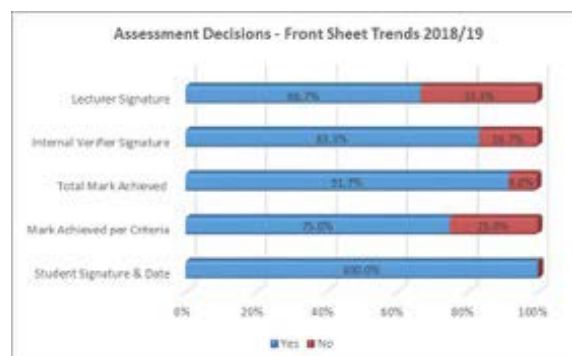
A prevalent use of the corporate front sheet was shown by 82.7% of academic staff, while approximately 60% of the assessment criteria addressed by assignments directly reflected those in the unit specifications. Where the Date Set is concerned, two approaches were noted. The date inputted would either reflect the date when the assignment brief was compiled and submitted for internal verification or when it was distributed to the student cohort. The former would be of greater relevance to an audit trail than the latter. On average, 85% of five of the fields included were compiled accurately, whereas the field for the Class/Group was included on the

corporate front sheet of the assignment brief by only 69.2% of assessors. A minimum of 75% of the fields represented were compiled, with the fields denoting the Assignment title and type tottering on the borderline of this statistic. Both are deemed necessary to the vocational essence of the programme and the robustness of the assessment/internal verification process feeding into internal and external audits.

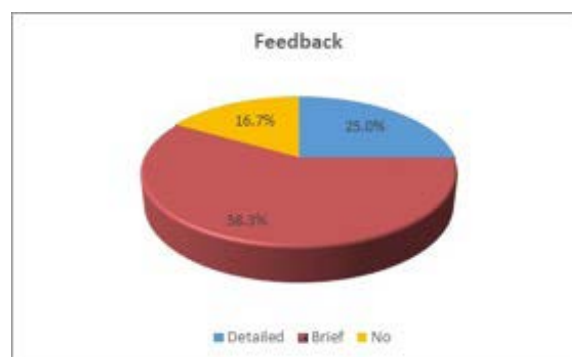
Analysis of assignment brief design trends also evoked interesting interpretations and opportunities for development. In most instances, appropriate tasks were embedded in a vocational setting with the language applied being relevant to the context, whilst clear instructions and notes, as well as a breakdown of the marks achievable per task, which recalled the specific criteria being addressed, were given to students. To date, the variety of assessment methods applied could not be discerned from the assignment briefs submitted and, thus, could only be ascertained in 24% of the samples. An overall picture of the way in which criteria are assessed across and within the various unit assignments is required so as to intensify the rigour of the process. Such a finding requires that an assessment plan accompanies future submittals of internally verified assignment briefs and assessment decisions.



Interesting trends and opportunities for improvement were also identified following analysis of assessment decision front sheet trends. Apart from constituting a declaration of ownership, the corporately required signatures, standing at approximately 66% for that of lecturers and 83% for that of internal verifiers, are necessary to the audit trail. Furthermore, over 91% of the samples had the total mark achieved by the student inputted on the Front Sheet, while only 75% included the mark achieved per criteria. This omission does not allow holistic verification. Inclusion of such marks contribute to the audit flow and, therefore, a quality product.



Where feedback from MCAST assessors is concerned, 25% was detailed and ties in with the schools of thought related to 'feedback and feedforward'. Approximately 60% of feedback was brief while the remaining samples either demonstrated some slight discrepancies or were mathematical in nature.



## Conclusion

The analysis highlighted above strengthens the premise that internal verification yields greatest benefits when integrated into an explicit quality management framework, as in the MCAST story. It serves to propel quality in relation to matters such as assessment, ensuring the validity and transferability of MCAST qualifications by adhering to the key indicators of a robust system identified by Betteridge et al (1996), as manageability, sustainability, satisfaction and consistency to inspire and aspire to an innate quality culture (Micallef Grimaud, 2008).

*\* Complete analysis and further results available in full report: MCAST Internal Verification 2018/19 – Micallef Grimaud J (2019)*

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# Meeting for Career Advisers, Guidance and PSCD Teachers

On 6th June 2019, the Department for Student Outreach Services held its annual meeting for Career Advisers, Guidance and PSCD Teachers from public, private and church schools across Malta and Gozo. The event was held in the Conference Hall at the MCAST Institute for Business Management and Commerce and was attended by over 60 career advisers and teachers.

**Participants** were greeted by an address delivered by Dr Nadia Vassallo, Deputy Principal Curriculum and Student Affairs who expressed the importance of the roles of those working in guidance with students. This guidance helps students to prepare themselves both academically as well as in the formation of their career paths. An overview of the Masters programmes was then given by Perit Joseph Falzon, Mr Stephen Hall and Ms Eleni Tsitsirigou from the Department of Research and Innovation. Mr Ronald Curmi, Deputy Principal Registrar, gave a detailed outline of the new Prospectus and the Progression Chart. He further explained that the upcoming intake of new students will be an online application process. Mr Curmi then informed those present that from this year his department will also offer assistance to new students when they are required to fill in the online application for the stipend.

The various services offered by the Outreach Services Department were explained in detail by Mr John Bartolo, Director of the Department. He gave information about the Career Guidance services, the Student Liaison Office and the newly set up Integration Office. Mr Bartolo then provided the audience with details



of the services such as Nutritional Advice, Tobacco Cessation and Addiction related issues, Mental and Sexual Health Services offered by the recently inaugurated Well-being Hub.

The talk was followed by a practical exercise on the different careers students can take after completing their training programmes at MCAST. The aim of the exercise was also to help those present to familiarize themselves with the newly launched Prospectus and Progression Chart. This exercise resulted not only in being informative but also interactive, challenging and fun.

Following a coffee break the participants received short

presentations by Mr Martin Borg, Director Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning as well as by Mr James Camilleri, Manager Integration Unit. Mr Joseph Zammit, Deputy Director Inclusive Education delivered an informative talk on the assistance and services offered by the unit whilst Ms Rita Briffa, youth worker, gave an overview of the services and activities offered by the Youth Hub.

A final interactive session was delivered by Ms Edel Cassar from the Strategy Implementation Office about the recently publicized MCAST Strategic Plan 2019/2021.



# Road Safety at MCAST



The College hosted a road safety simulation exercise among youth as part of the 5th UN Road Safety Week. This event was addressed by the Hon Dr Chris Fearne, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health. The students in attendance were also addressed by Mr Frederick Schembri, MCAST President of the Board of Governors, Dr Lucianne Licari and Mr Jonathan Passmore from the WHO Regional Office for Europe, and Dr Jonathan Joslin, Consultant A&E, Mater Dei Hospital.



**The** students were divided into groups, each headed by a student representing the various jurisdictions within the Malta Road Safety Council.

The representatives were from the Ministry for Transport, the Traffic Division of the Malta Police Force, the Ministry for Health, the Ministry for Education, the Ministry for Finance and the Insurance Council.

At the end a mock Road Safety Council Meeting and an open discussion chaired by Mr Pierre Vella, the Executive Chair of the Road Safety Council, were held with all participating students. Each group came up with very positive proposals which are grouped hereunder under the relative jurisdiction of the Malta Road Safety Council.



# Some Career Choices Myths

by Robert Cassar, B.Psy (Hons), MSc. Career Guidance (Edinburgh-Napier), Career Advisor, Student Outreach Services



We seem to be surrounded by three categories of people when it comes to career options

## CATEGORY 1

### **Determined**

These people seem to always know where their career is going.

## CATEGORY 2

### **Directionless**

As the name implies, these people do not seem to know if they are on the right track or not.

## CATEGORY 3

### **Whatever**

These people do not worry about decisions for their future and take each day as it comes.

The truth is that there is no such thing as categories of people but only good, bad and better decisions. Career exploration is more of a journey than a destination or a one-time decision.

There is no such thing as the “best” one time to discover what you wish to become or do. But there is the need to make some initial plans and start working in the direction that you want to focus on. In short take your time, but take “it”.

Lastly, it is absolutely all right to change your mind a few times, but it is vital to start taking baby steps in the right path.

## Some good tried-and-tested tips

- *Seek to...* Discover who you really are. Figuring out what you are good at is a must for long-term career planning.
  - *Seek to...* Discover what you enjoy doing. Which things tend to make you happier? Which subjects do you love most? Which activities take your undivided attention such that you do not even notice how much time has passed?
  - *Seek to...* Take time to explore and gather information about all the possible careers, however different they may be.
- Remember that you do not need to rush into any decision but all you need to do is to keep an open mind.

# Anne Marie Bugeja

MCAST journalism student Denilson Brincat  
interviewed Anne Marie Bugeja



## What motivated you to take part in the Special Olympic Games?

My love for gymnastics and sports motivated me. I took part in the Special Olympic Games to share my talent with other people.

## Do you think that youths should engage more in different sports activities?

Yes, it is very important. It helps you both physically and mentally.

## How did it feel, receiving your medal?

I felt very happy and satisfied. I did not think I was going to make it that far.

## What is your next big goal?

Since the world games are every four years, I am training very hard, to hopefully achieve the Gold medal.

## Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

I see myself coaching people with disability

## What was your best moment from this experience?

When I participated for the first time in the world games, in 2011. Another moment was when I met Nadia Comaneci and also when I became the world champion in floor exercises.

## How do you manage to balance school life and sports?

I must admit that it is quite difficult, but it is all about time management. I also have a lot of support from my friends and the Special Olympics Committee.

## Can you give out a message to other students who would like to participate in more activities such as sports?

Do not ever feel disheartened, everyone is capable.



# **ZERO TOLERANCE FOR POSSESSION OF HARMFUL ITEMS**

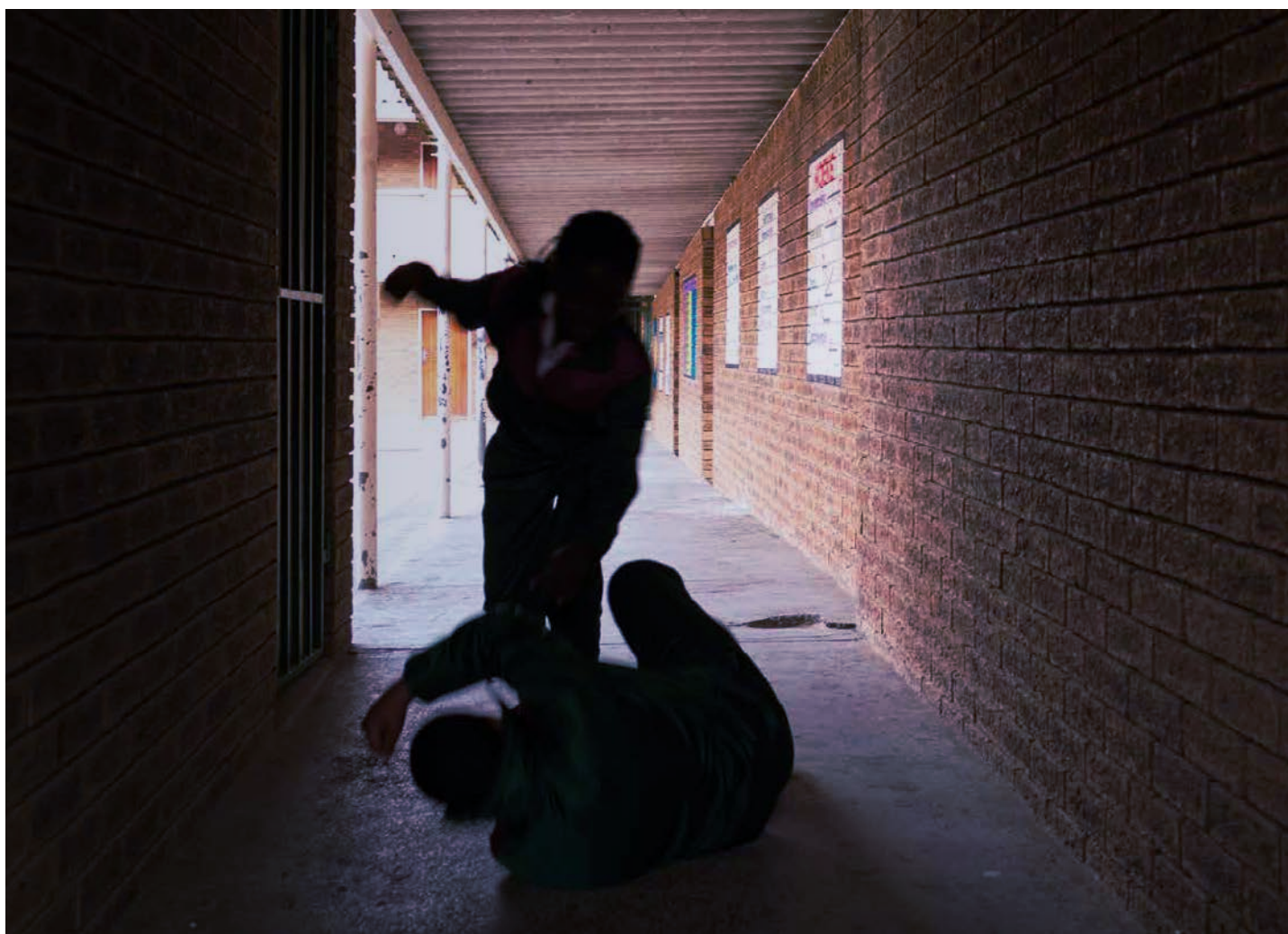
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