

Dear City Student,

I am writing to extend my personal welcome to you, whether you are a returning student or newly arrived at the College; and I wish you every success in your studies. City of Glasgow College has wonderful lecturing and support staff to guide you through your learning and enhance your experience of being at College. We are also extremely fortunate to have a world-class, twin-site super campus with state of the art facilities, an incredible study environment and excellent digital learning tools. I hope you are settling in well to the new academic year.

As you will know by now, industrial action is taking place at the College throughout much of this month. EIS-FELA (the trade union for our lecturers) is undertaking national and local strikes for 15 days in September, and UNISON (the support staff trade union) is holding national strikes for two days this month. Details of when this industrial action is taking place can be found on our [website](#).

It is important however that you know **the College remains open** on all strike days, and we do encourage students to come in. Check with your lecturers, but most classes will still be running; and you can also use the library, study spaces, fitness and sports areas as usual. Our College virtual learning environment and intranet -- Canvas and CityLife -- are available to access course information. There are in addition free Breakfast Clubs running every weekday from 8.30 to 9.15am at Riverside Canteen (Level 1) and City Refectory (Level 2), as well as an excellent range of support, including the '5 Steps to Success' Workshops and introductions to the Library - more details can be found on [CityLife](#).

Of course, strikes are disruptive and regrettable, and I very much share your frustration about these unkind actions which ultimately impact most on you and your fellow students. Colleges like our own are by now very experienced in dealing with EIS-FELA's annual industrial action, given this is now the eighth time in 10 years that they have been on strike across the College sector. This approach ultimately damages the life chances of college students in particular, and the good standing of the college sector in general. At the end of last year's EIS-FELA strikes, three-quarters of our lecturing staff continued to work as normal through these strikes out of loyalty to our students. Despite the misinformation you may be receiving, please be assured that your College is working tirelessly to minimise the negative impact on your studies.

## Background to industrial action

For our new students in particular, I would like to explain the background to this industrial action. All colleges throughout Scotland have been facing significant financial and funding pressures for several years, and these have been further exacerbated, as we were coming out of COVID, by 10% cut in real terms to our core teaching funding by the Scottish Government (via the Scottish Funding Council).



High inflation rates, high energy costs and increased pay demands have resulted in colleges all over Scotland having to take tough choices to balance the books. The issues we face are not the result of any decisions that this College's management has taken or not taken.

As both a publicly funded tertiary institution and also a regulated charity, the College has a legal obligation to maintain financial sustainability with a balanced budget. We have, therefore, been forced to take some very difficult and early decisions. As a forward-looking College and the largest in Scotland, we have engaged proactively, regularly and transparently for almost two years now with our staff and trade unions, explaining to them these significant financial and funding pressures.

Last year, our carefully planned approach enabled us to find savings, grow income from partnerships (especially overseas) and reduce staffing by losing 76 roles through voluntary severance, which considerably improved our finances. Unfortunately, we were still left to deal with a significant deficit; so, with a very heavy heart, and for the first time in the College's history, we were left with no option other than to bring forward in May proposals for compulsory redundancies. This painful process is however nearing a conclusion and should be finalised in the coming weeks: but again, I stress that we are doing everything we can to minimise the impact on you and your studies.

EIS-FELA is also simultaneously undertaking national 'Action Short of Strike' to maximise the level of disruption to you and your classmates. For example, some staff are still refusing to give us the results of some students' courses, despite the fact that university lecturers recently voted to stop withholding student results. During the summer, I wrote to students to say that we hoped we would successfully reduce the effect of this action and ensure that the majority of our students would successfully progress to their destination by the end of August despite the Union's deliberately disruptive tactic. I'm pleased to say that by the end of last month over 80% of results had been submitted. If you are one of the few still waiting for your final results from last year, please check our website for more details [here](#).

I hope that this letter helps reassure you, and please remember that the College remains open despite this the disruption caused by the strike. It is my earnest hope that we will put this industrial action behind us so we can Let Learning Flourish. I would strongly encourage you to keep yourself up to date, so please regularly check the College [website](#) for further information.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul GK Little', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Paul GK Little CBE

Principal & Chief Executive