



Highland students taking steps to success

--- More than 200 students enjoy Inverness College UHI CREATE event ---

--- Highland entrepreneurs offer advice on starting out in business ---

Budding entrepreneurs from Inverness to Shetland have been left inspired after they were given advice on how to succeed in business by local industry leaders.

The students from Inverness College UHI joined more than 200 of their colleagues from across the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) network for the interactive virtual student conference, which took place via video link.

Led by the CREATE team at Inverness College UHI in association with Bridge 2 Business, part of Young Enterprise Scotland, the first session saw students receive presentations from local business leaders in a range of industries including craft brewing, personal training and tattooing.

Inverness

Among those addressing students was Billy Andrew, owner of Inver Ink, a tattoo studio based in Inverness. Mr Andrew said: "Taking part in the virtual student conference was a terrific way to reach out to the next generation of entrepreneurs in the Highlands.

"Owning your own business involves working hard on something you believe in, an incredibly enriching experience. It's about waking up in the morning not fearing the alarm clock and most importantly, doing something for the enjoyment.

"Events like the virtual student conference help equip the students with the skills and belief required to guide them on the path to career success."

Moray

Among those addressing students was Seb Jones, managing director of Speyside Craft Brewery. Reflecting on the conference, he said: "The event had a lot of energy about it, the students were full of ideas and the interaction was stimulating.

"The UHI environment was conducive to creative thinking, and if the students at the event are representative of the calibre of entrepreneurs Scotland is developing, the economic future of the country is in good hands.

"I certainly found it very inspiring, and I hope they got out of it as much as I did."

Shetland

Among those addressing students was Ingrid Webb, chief executive officer of Cope Ltd, a social enterprise and charity which provides employment and skill development for adults with disabilities in the Northern Isles.



Reflecting on the conference, she said: "I thoroughly enjoyed spending some time talking to the students, albeit in a virtual way.

"Social enterprise is a passion of mine and I was pleased to be able to speak to young people about its structure and benefits. Scotland is a country with great ambition and this is especially prevalent in the Highlands and Islands.

"I truly believe that all businesses should embrace their social responsibilities. I hope I was able to highlight the benefits of social enterprise and show that we may be geographically isolated in the Highlands and Islands, but it does not need to restrict us."

Stornoway

Among those addressing students was Claire Macleod, of Charles Macleod Butchers in Stornoway. She shared the story of Stornoway Black Pudding, which was awarded Protected Geographical Indicator status by the European Commission, and the impact of it being labelled a 'superfood'.

Claire said: "It was exciting to be a part of the CREATE conference and to interact with the students.

"As a former Lews Castle business student, I recognise how valuable it is for students to spend time with growing and developing businesses from the area and hear first-hand what their owners have learned on their journey.

"I would encourage many more businesses to give their time to encourage and invest in the entrepreneurs of the future."

Isle of Skye

Among those addressing students was Shirley Spear, founder and director of The Three Chimneys, an award winning restaurant in Colbost, on Skye.

Reflecting on the conference, she said: "Our Team at The Three Chimneys is keen to foster relationships with schools and colleges locally and throughout the wider Highlands and Islands region.

"We feel it is crucial, as a leading hospitality business operating in the area, to build stronger connections in order to help encourage young people to stay in the region, learn and develop their skills through valuable, hands-on experience in the workplace.

"I certainly found the conference very inspiring, and I hope the students got out of it as much as I did."

Reflecting on the event, Mimmi Sadolin, a 22-year-old HNC business student from Inverness, said: "The interactive conference was a terrific experience.

"I was inspired by the passion, enthusiasm and determination shown by the speakers during the event, all of whom are successful entrepreneurs in their own right. The event offered real



insight into the steps taken to make it in their chosen fields and brought the idea of starting a business to life.”

Students and staff from all colleges within the UHI network were involved in the conference, giving people across the network the opportunity to learn about enterprising development. The conference, which was the second annual event of its type, forms the latest attempt by CREATE to give students the opportunity to engage with entrepreneurial role models in the region.

Carol Langston, head of CREATE, said: “The conference was an excellent opportunity for students, helping them see the brilliant entrepreneurial talent which is on their doorstep.

“These events give them the confidence and encouragement to take those first steps into self-employment while preparing for the demands of the modern workplace and laying the solid foundations for a successful career.”

Speakers at the CREATE conference were: Billy Andrew, of Inver Ink; Daniel Moore; Seb Jones, of Speyside Craft Brewery; Claire Macleod, of Charles Macleod Butchers; Ingrid Webb, of COPE Ltd; Shirley Spear, of The Three Chimneys; Jill Innes, of Storyboard Films; Nicky Marr.

For more information about Inverness College UHI visit: www.inverness.uhi.ac.uk

For more information about CREATE visit: www.createhighland.com

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For more information, images or interviews, please contact Mark Good at Weber Shandwick on 0141 333 0557 or mgood@webershandwick.com

Notes to Editors

About Inverness College UHI and CREATE:

Inverness College UHI has been in operation for over 50 years and is an integral part of the local community. Home to more than 6,500 students with around 200 courses on offer across nearly 30 subject areas, the College offers flexible learning methods to suit a wide variety of student needs and locations.

Inverness College UHI is one of the biggest in a group of 13 individual colleges and research institutions collectively known as the University of the Highlands and Islands. The institution, which delivers courses tailored to the needs of the local business community, relocated to its new multi-million pound facility at Inverness Campus in August 2015.

Inverness College UHI's Create Centre was established in 2009 to stimulate and support students, academics and the business community to develop their entrepreneurial spirit, knowledge and skills. For more information visit: www.createhighland.com.