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NALCAC

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED COORDINATORS

March 2009

Issue No 4

NEWS BULLETIN

STUDENTS RECEIVE FEARGAL QUINN LCA AWARDS



*Pictured left to right at the Awards Ceremony are
Sinead Broderick, Kevin Gavin, Yvonne Muldoon and Brea O'Callaghan*

The first ever Feargal Quinn Leaving Certificate Applied Awards were presented to the five students who achieved the highest number of credits in the Leaving Certificate Applied 2008 at a special awards ceremony in the Red Cow Moran Hotel on Saturday November 15th. The awards were presented during the second annual conference of the National Association of Leaving Certificate Applied Coordinators.

The recipients included:

Erinn Geraghty, Letterfrack Youth Reach Centre, Galway

Brea O'Callaghan, Colaiste Choilm, Ballincollig,

Sinead Broderick, Ardscoil Mhuire, Mackney, Ballinasloe,

Kevin Gavin, Rice College, Westport

Yvonne Muldoon, Eureka Secondary School, Kells, Co. Meath



Conference 2008 a huge success

see page 6

New NALCAC Blog - air your views

NEW LCA BLOG – AIR YOUR VIEWS

We are currently investigating the setting up of a blog for members linked to our website. This will be very important in the coming months as it will provide an opportunity for members to discuss how the cutbacks are effecting the LCA programme in our schools. Check out our website for up to date information or check out www.lcaassociation.blogspot.com

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Our next regional meetings will be held in March. These meetings will be advertised at a local level. The aim of the regional meetings is to provide an opportunity for LCA teachers and coordinators to network and support each other and to raise and discuss important issues in relation to the LCA. This year, in particular, the meetings will discuss feedback the impact of the educational cutbacks on the Leaving Certificate Applied programme. The regional meetings will also have an inservice input from experienced coordinators and teachers. If you have any suggestions re areas that you need extra support please contact us as soon as possible. Our contact details are at the back of this newsletter.

SWEETMAN EDUCATIONAL TRUST

The Sweetman Educational Trust, with the generous assistance of each VEC and support of the Irish Vocational Education Association, is awarding trips to Strasbourg to 33 Leaving Certificate Applied students, one from each V.E.C. area during Spring 2009.

While in Strasbourg the 33 winning students will visit the European Parliament and will have an opportunity to meet and socialise with students from other European States. Each will commit to taking an active part in a forum in the parliament with their European colleagues.

The competition is based on the LCA Contemporary Issues Task. The Competition requires entrants to make an oral presentation to the Sweetman Assessors on the Contemporary Issues Task. Presentations must incorporate a European dimension.

Contact your local VEC for more information.

Membership News

Membership of the Association continues to rise. During the last year membership exceeded two hundred members.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who joined for the first time this year and also those who renewed their membership.

A large membership is very important to ensure the continued growth in strength of the Association.

The cost of membership remains the same as previous years at €20 per coordinator or €30 per school where there is more than one coordinator. The membership year begins on Sept 1st each year and ends on Aug 31st.

I would be grateful if you could let me know directly of any membership queries you may have. I would also be obliged if you could let me know if you have not received a membership card and receipt even though you have renewed your membership. I can be contacted at the number below.

John Linehan 022 42290



Networking at the national conference.



Networking at the national conference.



Liam Deaton, NALCAC chairman welcomes the delegates



Link with Dublin West Education Centre

Many thanks to Mary Dunne and Angie Grogan, Dublin West Education Centre for all their hard work supporting the association with the organisation of our second annual conference. The support of the Dublin West Education Centre has ensured the continued growth of the Association.

A tribute to Patricia Burke



It was with great sadness that we learned of the untimely death of Patricia Burke in August last year. Patricia was a member of The Coordinators Association from almost its foundation, she served on the council and was Hon Treasurer for a number of years. Patricia's contribution to the association was enormous. Her honest and frank approach as well as her ability to get to the core of an issue quickly enriched meetings that she attended. Patricia's belief and dedication to The Leaving Cert Applied was only matched by her commitment to the students she worked with in James' Street CBS Dublin. Her belief of putting students first, combined with her light hearted approach to problems will be greatly missed in her school.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Patricia's family, friends and work colleagues.

Senator Feargal Quinn congratulates the award winning students



In 1993 I was asked by the Minister for Education, Niamh Breathnach, T.D., to become Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the Leaving Certificate Applied – part of the National Council for Curriculum Assessment.

It turned out to be one of the most interesting and rewarding challenges that I have undertaken. I had the opportunity to meet – and learn from – some of the foremost experts on education in the world, from the United States came Howard Gardner who had written and promoted the idea that there were 7 different kinds of intelligences. Charles Handy from Co. Kildare claimed there were 10 different intelligences. The most important point was that the traditional Leaving Cert only measured one of the intelligences – hence the welcome that was given to the Leaving Cert Applied because it recognised many of the other intelligences that had not been measured by the traditional Leaving Cert.

One point I continually made over and over again was that the Leaving Cert Applied is a real Leaving Cert and we created ‘swear boxes’ for any school that referred to it by its initials LCA. The reason for that is that nobody ever refers to the Leaving Cert as the LC. So do your best to make people pay 10 cent if they ever use the initials rather than the full title Leaving Cert Applied!

To me the introduction of the Leaving Cert Applied was the most important development in the educational system in recent years. At last we have variants of the Leaving Cert which cater for the particular talents and aptitudes of all students.

Prior to its introduction, you had to take a Leaving Cert that was suited only for some of the young people going forward for it. For many of them it was a frustrating and ultimately unrewarding experience. Now there is a choice that takes into account the generally accepted fact that different people have different kinds of strengths, and we should build for their future on those intelligences rather than on exposing and punishing weaknesses.



The result is that we now have the makings of an entirely new system in place which

- focuses on identifying personal strengths and developing them,
- focuses on action learning which links what is learned to practical real-world tasks,
- reaches out from the classroom into the world of work and, hopefully, also into the community outside the school.

The Leaving Cert Applied gives students

- the ability to get things done, rather than to talk about them and analyse them
- the ability to get things done in a team of other people, reflecting the fact that work is essentially a cooperative activity and becoming more so.
- the ability to use knowledge to solve new problems, rather than simply to apply rote solutions to familiar problems – in other words, the ability to bring imagination and creativity to work.
- the ability to communicate and persuade through the spoken word – which is the way most communication happens in day-to-day business.

I would like to salute the real heroes and heroines – the young students who have received the 2008 Leaving Cert Applied Awards. I stand in awe of their achievements. I know from my own experience in the world of business that when young people first taste success there is no stopping them. I have seen mountains being moved, by young people who discovered a sense of self-esteem and self-worth for the first time - and who therefore discovered within themselves a powerful motivation. My sincere congratulations to each of the students who have done so brilliantly in this exam. May you go from strength to strength!

Senator Feargal Quinn

Presentation of the Feargal Quinn L



Kevin Gavin, Rice College, Westport

Kevin was always a diligent student with high expectations and aspirations. He always worked to the best of his ability and strived to achieve the highest points he could throughout the programme. His teachers describe as a quite, well balanced young man. He has an interest in motor sports (rally driving). Kevin is also an avid reader. Kevin plans to enter the world of work, by getting an apprenticeship in carpentry. He also works part-time in a local hotel as a barman to help finance a very "snazzy" car. The Principal of Rice College is Ms Patricia Atkins and the Leaving Certificate Applied Coordinator is Ms Julie Kennedy

Kevin Gavin, Rice College, Westport receiving his award from Eamonn Quinn, son of Feargal Quinn



Brea O'Callaghan, Colaiste Choilm, Cork

Brea is presently completing a two year course in Leisure and Recreation, in Coláiste Stiofáin Naofa, Tramore Road, Cork. Brea is a bubbly, bright, and enthusiastic young lady. During her five years in Coláiste Choilm she was popular among both her peers, and the teaching staff. She is an avid sports enthusiast, captaining the schools senior Camogie Team to all Ireland glory. She continues to excel with Ballincollig Senior B camogie club winning the County Finals a few weeks ago. Brea also plays soccer with Ballincollig Soccer club, and Coláiste Stiofáin Naofa. She was a key member of the Coláiste Choilm basketball team and now plays on the college team. Brea gives 100% to every challenge she undertakes.

Coláiste Choilm staff and management are very proud of her.

Brea has also been nominated for the Tomás O'Connell award for this year. Colaiste Choilm has won this award each year since 2001.

Brea O'Callaghan, Colaiste Choilm, Cork receiving her Feargal Quinn LCA Award.



Ms. Yvonne Delaney, LCA Coordinator, Colaiste Choilm, Cork

Coláiste Choilm is run by Co. Cork VEC, and is a large co-ed school with approximately 1260 students. The principal is Mr Pat Kinsella and the Leaving Certificate Applied Coordinator is Ms Yvonne Delaney.

Ms. Yvonne Delaney, LCA Coordinator, being presented with the school certificate by Eamonn Quinn, son of Feargal Quinn



Ms. Marie O'Brien, LCA Coordinator, Ardscoil Mhuire, Ballinsloe, Co. Galway

Ardscoil Mhuire, Mackney, Ballinsloe is an all girls school with 450+ of an enrolment. The principal is Ms. Patricia Kilgallen and the LCA Coordinator is Ms. Marie O'Brien. The first LCA group in the school started the programme in 2003 and they have successfully conducted the programme since with the majority of students going on to further education. The numbers per year enrolling on the LCA programme average between 10 and 16.

Ms. Marie O'Brien, LCA Coordinator, Ardscoil Mhuire, Ballinsloe, Co. Galway accepting the school certificate from Eamonn Quinn

Leaving Cert Applied Awards 2008

Sinead Broderick, Ard Scoil Mhuire, Mackney, Ballinsloe, Co. Galway

Sinead Broderick was a model LCA student and certainly the staff of Ardscoil Mhuire wasn't surprised to learn she had achieved such an excellent result. She was a member of the student council in the school and a school prefect. She also was a member of the Debs organising committee. Sinead is now studying Social Studies in Moate.

Sinead Broderick, Ard Scoil Mhuire receiving her Feargal Quinn LCA Award



Ms Gabriel Harte.

Eureka is almost an all girl's school in Kells, Co. Meath. The Principal is Ms Caroline O'Reilly and the Leaving Certificate Applied Coordinator is Ms Gabriel Harte.

The school is widely known for the high standards of its Leaving Certificate Applied students and it's Established Leaving Cert.

Ms. Gabriel Harte, LCA Coordinator, being presented with the school certificate by Eamonn Quinn, son of Feargal Quinn



Yvonne Muldoon Moynalty, Co Meath

Yvonne Muldoon from Moynalty, Co Meath was also an awards recipient. Yvonne was a very conscientious, diligent student. She had an excellent attendance record, and committed herself to her work 110%; she was always looking for a way to improve her work. Yvonne has great love of horses and her Practical Achievement Task was had a strong equine component. Yvonne is currently continuing her education in Cavan College of Further Education where she is studying Tourism and Airline studies

Yvonne Muldoon receiving her award from Eamonn Quinn, son of Feargal Quinn



Erinn Geraghty, Letterfrack, Co. Galway

Letterfrack Youth Reach Centre, Letterfrack, Cliften Co Galway has a student population of 45 to 50 students. They have offered the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme since 1999. The principal/Director/Leaving Certificate Applied coordinator is Ms Theresa McLoughlin.

Erinn Geraghty is an exceptionally bright, intelligent young girl who works hard, she leaves no stone unturned in her pursuit of excellence. She is a young lady who once she starts a project she will see it through and only her best is good enough. Erinn was indisposed and unable travel to Dublin to receive her award. She is currently taking a year out working in Cliften, but has plans to pursue her education further. The centre has featured in a promotions video on the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. This award is further recognition of the tremendous work which is ongoing in Youth Reach Centres, not just in Letterfrack but throughout the country.

Ms. Theresa Mc Loughlin accepting an award on behalf of Erinn Geraghty from Eamonn Quinn, son of Feargal Quinn



Conference 2008 a huge success

The keynote address by Professor Tom Collins, NUIM was a wide ranging challenging presentation which considered the role of the Leaving Certificate Applied in the rapidly changing society of 2008. Professor Collins noted that the LCA is provided mainly by larger community comprehensive schools with designated disadvantaged status. He argued that we should not educate towards the needs of the economy either primarily or solely. We should educate towards the developmental needs of the students at their particular life cycle stage.



Professor Tom Collins NUIM

Budget Cutbacks

The coordinators attending the conference expressed grave concern at the impact the education cutbacks, announced in the recent budget, would have on the Leaving Certificate Applied programme and called on the Minister for Education, Mr. Batt O’Keeffe to increase rather than decrease the budget available to schools who run this very important programme.



Liam Deaton, Chairman, opens the awards ceremony.

Popular Workshops

The key areas addressed by the workshops at the conference proved to be very popular with the delegates. Workshop A was presented by Deirdre Mathews, St. Vincents Secondary School, Dundalk who outlined a school’s experience of an LCA evaluation. Workshop B addressed the assessment of the PAT task and the Contemporary Issues Task. The presenters for this workshop was Tom Rodgers from Ballinode College, Sligo and Benji Hallihan, Cork. Jane Landy, author of ‘The Student Task 1 and 2’ presented workshop C which advised delegates on how to make the most of the task experience. Deborah Dunne, the NFTE Enterprise Teacher of the Year, 2008 presented workshop D which considered how to make

Enterprise a key part of the LCA experience. The feedback from the workshops was very positive. The participants found the content of the workshops to be very practical and relevant.



Majella O’Shea, NCCA and Noirin Hynes, State Examinations Commission



Sharing a light moment!



Left to right: Evelyn Mc Loughlin, Sheila O’Driscoll, LCA Support Service with Deirdre Mathews.

Address by Pat Carey, T.D.

Firstly, I would like to thank the National Association of Leaving Certificate Applied Coordinators, the Teacher Professional Networks and the Dublin West Education Centre for inviting me here today, and also for organising the conference which I know is a huge task.

I would like to welcome Professor Tom Collins from NUI Maynooth who is the keynote speaker at today's conference. Having looked at the programme for the day ahead I am in no doubt that you will have an extremely interesting morning, and will gain invaluable insights that you will be able to take back to your schools and improve even further the experience and performance of your LCA students.

The success of the LCA is evidenced by the growth in the level of participation in the programme over the past 13 years. When it was first introduced, it was offered in 50 schools and centres for education and there were 1,200 students enrolled in it. Now, some 380 schools and centres provide LCA and 3445 candidates completed the final examinations in June 2008.

Opportunities for Further & Higher Education

Among the many positive findings in a 2007 ESRI research report conducted for the NCCA into the experiences of post primary students was that one third of LCA students reported having aspirations of continuing to third level. The LCA provides an excellent first step in developing the skills required to achieve the goal of continuing on a path of further and higher education. I understand that the National Association of LCA Coordinators have gathered profiles of LCA students, and have found that many students who previously encountered difficulties in their educational experience flourished when they joined the LCA programme. The profiles also show examples of progression to third level via PLC courses on successful completion of the LCA.

The LCA has enhanced educational opportunities for young people and is a gateway through which students can successfully progress into either the world of work or into further education. It enables students to develop a strong set of versatile and practical skills which they can use to participate fully as valuable and useful members of society in whatever paths they choose to follow.

I believe that the key to the success of the Leaving Certificate Applied is that it focuses on the talents of individual students and helps them to apply their learning to the reality of their lives. The programme is innovative in the way students learn, in what they learn and in how their achievements are assessed. It is characterised by educational experiences of an active, practical and student-centred nature and it concentrates on providing for the development of students' understanding, self-esteem and sense of responsibility.

Budget in relation to LCA

As you will all be aware we are currently experiencing a challenging economic environment and, in framing the budget this year, a range of very difficult policy choices had to be faced by the Government across all areas of public expenditure, including in the field of education. While education remains a priority for the Government, it has been necessary to curtail expenditure in some areas. Among the areas affected is the Leaving Certificate Applied where the special grant has been ceased with an estimated saving of €1.2 million. However, I



Pat Carey, T.D. Government Chief Whip and Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach opens the second annual conference

would like to emphasise that the capitation grant for post-primary schools has been increased by 4.3%, representing an increase of €14 per student, to bring it to €345 per student from January 2009.

In addition, voluntary secondary schools will benefit also from an increase in the school services support grant by €8 per student from January 2009. This will mean, for example, that a secondary school with an enrolment of 500 students will receive an additional €11,000 in funding in 2009.

The LCA, taken by approximately 6% of students, is subject to review and appropriate revisions are made to ensure that the needs of all students in the intended target group are met in the best possible way. This will continue to be the case, and I am confident that the Leaving Certificate Applied will continue to be a viable option for students.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate a number of LCA students who will this afternoon receive the inaugural Fergal Quinn Award in recognition of their achievement in obtaining the highest credits in the 2008 Leaving Certificate Applied examination. This is a fantastic achievement, and a well deserved acknowledgement of the hard work that has been demonstrated by these students. I would like to take this opportunity to wish them all every success in the future, and to congratulate both the students and the schools.

Finally, I am delighted to officially open the second annual Leaving Certificate Applied Conference which has been organised by the National Association of Leaving Certificate Applied Coordinators.

NALCAC Council members meet Pat Carey, T.D.



Liam Deaton, John Linehan, Pat Carey, T.D. Mary Farrell, Tom Rodgers, Geri Nolan and John Kearney

AGM 2008 Report

Members were welcomed to the agm by Liam Deaton Chairman. John Linehan paid tribute to Patricia Burke, Treasurer of the Association who passed away in August 2008. M. Farrell paid tribute to a member Mia Delaney who also passed away during the summer of 2008.

M. Farrell read the minutes of the 2007 agm. This was followed by the Chairman's address and the secretary's report which outlined the activities of the association during the previous year. The financial report was presented by Liam Deaton and accepted by the membership. John Linehan reported that membership of the association was at its highest ever and thanked all members for renewing their membership so promptly.

Election of Officers:

Chairman: Tom Rodgers, proposed by Mary Farrell and seconded by Deirdre Mathews
 Secretary: Mary Farrell, proposed by Tom Rodgers and seconded by Geri Nolan
 Treasurer: Liam Deaton proposed by Geri Nolan and seconded by Tom Rogers
 Margaret O'Shea, Colaiste Dulaigh joined the central council.

AOB: The discussion here centered on the possible impact of the proposed cutbacks on the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.

Concern was expressed by members that the smaller class units will be no longer viable. There was also concern about the impact of the ending of funding for the programme. It was felt that without trips out and visitors into the class that there would be a reversal to chalk/talk teaching. It was agreed that the Association would endeavour to publicise the possible impact of the cutbacks on the LCA. It was agreed that the association would survey members to ascertain how the cutbacks were impacting on the LCA at a local level.

The closing date for computer returns was raised. It was felt that the date followed on too soon after the mid term break and that there were difficulties with the site being closed at particular times.

The drop in the number of distinctions being awarded was also noted. Once again the difficulties being experienced with the PRT was raised. It was felt that this is a difficult task, the standard is too high. There was a proposal that the title of the task should be expanded.

Liam Deaton closed the meeting and thanked all present for attending.

NEW COUNCIL ELECTED

Tom Rodgers, Chairman,
 Ballinode College,
 Clarion Road, Ballinode, Sligo.

Mary Farrell, Hon Secretary,
 Greenhills College, Greenhills,
 Dublin 12.

Liam Deaton, Treasurer,
 Killester Senior Collge, Dublin.

John Linehan, Membership Secretary,
 Nagle Rice Secondary School,
 Doneraile, Co. Cork.

Janet Hinchion,
 Claremorris, Co. Galway

Geri Nolan,
 Colaiste Eoin, Cappagh Road,
 Finglas, Dublin 1.

Margaret O'Shea,
 Colaiste Dulaigh, Coolock, Dublin.

MEMBERSHIP 2008/2009

For Your Information
To contact the Association:
Tel: 086 2358638
or email: info @ lca-association.com
Web: www.lca-association.com

NCCA – Leaving Certificate Applied Committee

The NALCAC council has nominated Mary Farrell, Hon. Secretary to represent the Association on a Leaving Certificate Applied committee being established by the NCCA to review how the LCA is working for learners, for schools and for the wider education system. Discussion of LCA will be set in the wider context of the senior cycle developments and research being undertaken by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). The work to be undertaken by this committee will help shape the future development of the Leaving

Certificate Applied programme. The invitation by the NCCA to nominate a representative on this committee is an acknowledgement of the valuable contribution of this association and its members in past years to the development of the Leaving Certificate Applied. The views of all our members will be sought on all issues as they arise throughout the developmental and consultative processes in question.

A tribute to Mia Delaney



*Mick Arthur, Carleen Keogh (Leaving Cert Applied)
 Wynne McCormack (sister of the late Mia Delaney whose memory the laptop is presented in & Mary Daly (Principal)
 Carleen Keogh is studying Computers in Ballyfermot College*

Mia Delaney was the LCA coordinator in St. Dominic's Secondary School in Ballyfermot for a period of ten years. She passed away very suddenly in July 2008, much to the shock of her family, colleagues and students. Mia was an enthusiastic member of NALCAC and regularly attended the events we organised. She valued the work of our association and recognised its importance as a way of communicating with the SEC on issues. Her enthusiasm for the LCA was infectious. She was extremely proud of the achievements of her past pupils and their achievements in PLC courses and third level education. The huge presence of past pupils and parents at her funeral was a testament to her work in St. Dominics.

Ar dheis De go raibh a hanam dhilis.

St. Dominic's introduced a Mia Delaney Memorial Award in November 2008. It was presented to the student who achieved the highest credits in the Leaving Certificate Applied in 2008.