

“We Have Issues!”

The Mount Observer

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Societal Issues Through Multiple Eyes

By Emily Boudreau

Candace Shivers, a Sociology Professor at Mount Wachusett Community College, talked about race relations and poverty being the two most important social issues of our time period. Poverty is affecting many different individuals today at an alarming rate.

“People who are struggling do not necessarily fight against the people who have a lot of money, they fight against each other,” Shivers replied when asked why she thought poverty was so prevalent today. She talked about how every person should have a right to education and how poverty is a vicious cycle that is very hard to get out of.

A higher education is extremely difficult to get for individuals once they reach poverty levels. Shivers also repeatedly said, “Education is the foundation of society.”

Shivers said backlash appeared when Barack Obama became President of the United States, which made groups of people believe that black people thought they were entitled. This is really where our current racial issues started. Every generation

likes to believe that they are better than the generation before and that things have changed; Shivers, however, does not believe this.

In the 1960’s there was a large distrust of police officers and that issue has risen again in today’s society. Anyone that within the duties of their career that has power can easily misuse that power, and that is what some believe is happening with some of the current police officers.

“In our society there is a general distrust of police officers, no matter what their race is,” said Shivers. In the 1960’s we had the same issues of believing police were not there to actually protect us.

Jeffery Howe, a lieutenant of the Fitchburg Police Department, talked about opiate addiction being a large problem in today’s society. “Unfortunately once individuals get hooked on the drug, a lot of them cannot come off of it. We are pretty much losing an entire generation of people who could be successful and flourish in society,” said Howe.

Opiate addiction has become a huge problem in the past year in the United States, affecting many people in our society. Howe talked about addiction having to do with the easy accessibility and overprescribing of pain medications in past years. He also mentioned that to change our society for the future, everyone needs and deserves a higher education. Similar to Shiver’s views, Howe said that if we had more affordable colleges, more people would get an education and that is key to a brighter future.

“Education opens you up to many new things. Not only does it help you with a career but to introduce you to other cultures and aspects of life that you may have never seen otherwise,” said Howe.

Howe believes that media is the largest culprit when it comes to issues with police officers. The media can easily blow things out of proportion and distort stories and videos to make them television-worthy.

“We are very professional, we treat everyone the same. It does not matter what your color, creed, race, or religion is. What matters to us is our safety and

the safety of our citizens. If we go to a call and you’re carrying a gun illegally, you’re going to be arrested,” said Howe. The one thing Howe wanted to get across, especially to college students, is that all police officers are human and can make mistakes just like anybody else.

“99.9% of police officers are out there trying to do the right thing. Do you get a few bad apples? Absolutely. That can happen in any career,” said Howe.

Misha Barker, a student majoring in English, believes that society’s largest issue is income inequality. Unlike Shivers, Barker believes that poverty is due to the rising tension between the rich and the poor.

“There is an ever-growing divide between the rich and the rest of the world. This divide affects everyone from getting ahead, except the extremely wealthy,” said Barker. She also said that education is key to fixing many of society’s issues. Individuals who are forced into situations that hold them back from getting ahead would be able to change their lives if education was more affordable.

When Barker was asked about the distrust of police officers, she spoke about abuse of power and authority. “Police should be examples of the law, not above it,” said Barker. She said how police officers often treat students and the younger generation differently, which starkly contrasts Howe’s views.

The younger generation often feels that there is a target on them even if they are doing nothing wrong. Younger people often feel that they have less power, especially when it comes to issues with the police. Barker said there has been growth in issues of race, education, and medical care, even though there are still improvements to be made.

“There are many struggles ahead of us, but we are on the brink of change that will help our country so much,” said Barker.

Trio Programs Looking For New Students

By Courtney Wentz

Sandwiched between the Health office and Coordinator for Career Planning, across from the Student Services Office, sits the helpful staff of the Visions and Rx Programs.

The Visions Program recently got a grant to be able to accept more students into the program.

They are looking for active students to provide their services to, but there are some things to know before joining. The Visions Program offers free printing, free one-on-one tutoring sessions with the math or writing tutor, and a supportive staff to help or listen when you are having that end of the semester breakdown.

Joyce Kulig, Retention Specialist in the Visions Program, has been working for the program for eighteen years. She was a tutor outside of Visions, when she heard they had a job opening. Kulig stated, “The Visions Program helps the students navigate the college system.” The college system can be difficult

to work with. Having a group of people ready to help and answer questions can save a lot of time and frustration.

Visions also really care about their students. Kulig said, “Students are my favorite part of my job because I truly believe in education for all and I love watching individuals learn. Students also bring energy, fun, and laughter to the office. I admire how hard our students work, some of them with daily struggles that would knock me for a loop.”

The writing tutor Haneen Jaara has been working for the Visions Program since September 2015. Jaara started out as a writing tutor in the library and

someone told her she would be a good fit for the position as a writing tutor in the Visions Program. She said she likes “helping the students achieve their goals.” Jaara uplifts the stressful student when they are stuck with a paper due the next day. She will help create an outline for the paper and give helpful advice for a finished paper.

Even though she has not been working in the Visions Program for as long as Kulig, she brings something to the office with her adventurous flare and she is always jumping at the chance to help a student. Jaara said, “Students should join the Visions Program because it is a great community of counselors, tutors,

and staff that helps students with their academic coursework.” Not only do they help with coursework, but they can also help if you just need some extra support or a boost of confidence.

Shaina Wallace has been a student of the Visions Program for the three years she has been attending MWCC, as a Liberal Arts major. She recently had applied to Smith College, saying, “Applying to a new college was a pretty stressful experience and Visions really helped me make a sense of the process, which

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Forward in Health Experience

By Allison Cormier

Service learning and volunteer work are major components in achieving a well rounded college experience, in addition to helping yourself become a better person in society. Forward in Health, an organization that travels to Haiti and provides medical care, has been helping Mount Wachusett students achieve this for the past two years, and other volunteers for the past 10 years.

Co-founder and vice president of outreach and travel, Paula Mulqueen has been traveling to Haiti to provide medical treatment since 2001. She believes that providing service through international travel helps create a different perspective on life and shape individuals into more compassionate and caring people. She strives to create the best experience to those in her program.

Mulqueen explained that the trip is extremely organized and well planned out even before the trip begins. Planners are handed detailed outlines on what will be happening every minute of every day they are there, prior to departure, so volunteers will know exactly what they are getting into.

Jessica Leggudde, a nursing student from MWCC who went to Haiti with Forward in Health, agreed with Mulqueen, stating, "The trip was extremely safe, very controlled of who comes in and who goes out."

Over the years, Mulqueen has learned how to make a successful and productive work day for volunteers while in Haiti. Work days are from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., any longer and productivity decreases, and high school kids get a nap in the middle of the day. Legudde said that she liked the fact she was able to go into an empty room and personalize her workspace to her work style.

However, the trip is not all about work. After their work day volunteers get to go out and explore the island. Another nursing student, Amy Moison, reflected on the fun times she had in Haiti: going to the beach, waterfalls, biking, and elaborated on the time they were caught in a Mardi Gras parade and they all stood up and danced in the back of the truck.

Mulqueen wants potential volunteers to know that even though the medical work they do is great, the social aspect of the trip is far more important. The best thing volunteers can do for the people they are helping in Haiti is to, "smile, touch, interact". The children in Haiti just want to be held, be in your presence, and interact with you, said Mulqueen.

Moison recounted the time when she and Legudde were delivering care packages to children and one girl ran up to them, held their hands, and walked with them until they got back

to the gate. She explained how much it touched her heart just how happy the little girl was to just be in their presence.

Not only do they care for those in Haiti, they teach as well. Most nurses are not educated on the basic practices of medicine like CPR. Legudde thinks back on the time she and Moison taught a CPR class to one of the best nursing schools in the country, and the nurses claimed it was the best lesson they had ever had. This shows just how behind they are in modernization.

Forward in Health is a huge player in getting students out of their comfort zones and allowing them to expand their minds and do great work internationally. However, if you are not a nursing student, it is not the only opportunity Mount Wachusett offers to achieve your service learning internationally.

Shelly Nicholson, director of community learning at the Mount, recently visited, with student volunteers, Costa Rica to work with the animals. Nicholson explained that international travel can be nerve-racking, but in the end the personal and spiritual benefits are tremendous and allow you to be more conscious and grateful for the things that surround you every day.

Body Image

By Shelby Ayres

Body image is a big problem that has been affecting girls, continues to affect them, and appears to be more of a problem every year. Girls as early as 7-years-old are seeing themselves as fat. It is all due to the rise of the media and the fascination it has with photoshopping women, which creates unrealistic images of women, according to Kerrie Griffin, Psychology Professor at Mount Wachusett Community College.

Holly Tata, MWCC student, said, "I have always known that the models on the covers of popular magazines were photoshopped and tried to convince myself that even though I may not live up to the media's standards of skinny, it doesn't mean I'm not skinny. The problem is the media is hard to get away from since it's everywhere, so after a while of being constantly subjected to such beautiful and influential figures, it's hard to continue to convince yourself that you are still good enough."

A prime example of the media's influence is the most recent trend, the A4 paper challenge, where young women place a standard size piece of printer paper up against their waist and if they are bigger than it, they are fat. Griffin said about the trend, "I think it's scary for teens to care so much about how others feel. It's unhealthy. You can be smaller than a piece of paper and be healthy, but you can also be bigger than a piece of paper and still be healthy. It's crazy to take something and be so objective." Griffin also said that it is trends like these that lead young women to post full-body pictures of themselves online to get attention and end up with hateful comments saying she's "fat" or "slutty".

A great step in a positive direction is the release of a new, realistic Barbie doll, where the thigh gap is gone and the curves are existent. An anonymous student said in response to the new

Barbie, "I think the new Barbie designs are a godsend. Growing up with the tall, skinny, beautiful effigies of Society's Standards always made me feel ashamed of my body, which because I didn't look like a Barbie Doll, I thought I was ugly. The new dolls set a positive example for young girls, because they can see that everyone, just like Barbie, comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes, and all of those are beautiful."

Griffin added that if you are going to give children toys to play with that represent something, then it should represent the truth.

Unfortunately, albeit the new Barbie is a good step towards change, it does not change the fact that people are still being photoshopped and cropped. Luckily, a healthy alternative that might be a great solution is yoga. Yoga is a spiritual exercise where you let gravity take over and help restore your body.

Anne Goewey, Yoga Instructor at MWCC, as well as many other locations, offers a healthy solution to this problem, "Getting to know your body and to respect it is important. Don't wish it to be different. You become stronger and healthier and it attends to every system in the body. It's not about losing weight... those are byproducts. It's more about your mental and emotional relationship to your body. You learn to enjoy it as it is and you accept your limitations and celebrate your achievements and accomplishments. It's not an overnight thing. It transforms your relationship to your body because you're honoring it and getting to know your body."

She also said that the transformation will not happen overnight; it is a process that you have to be patient for. So as long as you dedicate at least 5 minutes a day for it, you will soon see results. To increase the results, eating healthier foods will also help the process, such as organic foods.

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Trio Program

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helped calm my nerves." The staff tries to help in any way they can, whatever the problem or concern may be.

Every door the in the Visions office is open, unless someone is out or with someone, but the staff's doors are always open

and ready to help. Wallace said, "All of my questions and concerns are always met with an enthusiastic need to help. It's like a second home."

MWCC campus agencies team up to keep our community safe

By Jillian Manty

At MWCC, the Campus Police force works closely with the different agencies on campus as well as outside police officers in order to ensure the safety of students, staff, and the community.

The Campus Police's most common interaction with students is usually just friendly conversations in the parking lots or hallways on campus. However, when disciplinary action is needed, they are always ready for it, whether it be alongside the Dean of Students office or even making formal arrests.

"We do make arrests or summon people to court for breaking laws," Melissa Croteau, Campus Police Lieutenant, said. "We are

also involved in the disciplinary procedures on campus with the Dean of Student Services. I have made and assisted with arrests on campus for various crimes including drug and weapon violations, restraining order violations, and assault and batteries. More so, my officers and I are involved with disciplinary actions with the Dean."

Jason Zelesky, Dean of Students, is very familiar with working with the Campus Police on issues that impact campus safety and student behavior. "It is an excellent partnership focused on building and maintaining a safe, inclusive, and respectful campus community," Zelesky said. "I

work with Campus Police every day – multiple times per day – to share information and respond to any and all concerns."

According to Zelesky, the officers are "exceptional people" who care a great deal for students and their success. "Compassionate", "informed", and "committed" are all adjectives that came to mind about the Campus Police.

In addition to disciplinary issues, the Campus Police also works frequently with Gregory Clement, Associate Dean of Students, on programming and event management.

"Campus Police provide coverage for events," said Clement.

"They work closely with us to assure our students and guests have a positive and safe experience at our events. We have a number of events each week. However, we have more collaboration with Campus Police on our traditional evening events."

According to Clement, all of his experiences with the Campus Police have been positive and he believes that they are always helpful and willing to help students and faculty alike.

In addition to attending various events and managing disciplinary issues, a typical day for an officer is very busy. For Croteau, being next in charge to Chief Kolimaga, her duties

include lots of mandated paperwork for reporting crimes on campus to the State Police and the FBI, reviewing officers' incident reports, writing and reviewing department policies, and scheduling all officers for trainings and weekly work schedules.

Campus Police are always training to better themselves and ensure the safety of both students and faculty at MWCC. Over her 15 years, Croteau has attended hundreds of trainings on various topics including legal updates, domestic violence, drug laws, mental health concerns, defensive tactics/fire arms, first responder, CPR/AED, first aid, and supervisor training.



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INFORMATION SESSIONS

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Schools Helping Veterans

By Nicole Benoit

Many colleges in the area have services or offices specifically for veterans. These services provide plenty of help with advising, counseling, and disability. Bringing in outside support systems from outside of the college is another way they help.

Located at Mount Wachusett Community College is a Veterans Success Center run by Robert Mayer. If a veteran is looking for help with anything school related, or just needs someone to talk to, then this is where they would go. Help for students isn't

the only thing provided, trying to educate faculty on certain issues so they can also help and understand their students in class is another reason schools have this service.

Last March, MWCC hosted a training session for faculty and staff. At this training they could learn about how veterans have a difficult time adjusting to coming back to civilian life.

"We have about 240 veteran students," said Mayer. "We provide all kinds of advice. I am not a psychologist, but I am often the

first point of contact. When necessary I can refer the student to our own college counselor/psychologist, Melissa Manzi, or a number of outside agencies such as the VA, Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, or SAVE (Statewide Advocacy for Veteran Empowerment)."

Mayer stated that "Veterans come to me as needed. There is a separate student group called Veterans and Allies that meets every other week."

Mark Ramos is one of the veterans that attends MWCC.

Although he is not part of any groups there, he still goes to the Veteran Success Center when he needs help with anything.

While attending school, he has a part-time job, and a son. "I try really hard to focus on school. I try not to put a lot of emphasis on my job. I do what I'm supposed to do but I don't feel the need to go above and beyond because it's not a long-term solution for me," said Ramos.

Coming back for Ramos was "very nerve-racking, because I was not a very good student in

high school. I did not really want to go back to college, but not having a degree was becoming a massive roadblock for employment options and opportunities." Ramos also stated that his wife is "very supportive of me going and finishing school."

Most veterans, like Ramos, who are just getting out of the military, and dealing with stress, start at a community college. Having these services can provide the help needed to become successful in the civilian and college life.

Tattooed and Employed

By Holly Tata

With the ever-growing popularity of tattoos in American culture, it is not a stretch to say that you could run into more than a few tattooed individuals just by walking around campus. Before the "tattoo renaissance" of the 1980's and 90's, it seemed like having tattoos was reserved for bikers, criminals, and gang related activities. Now all kinds of people have tattoos, from blue collar to white collar workers.

But while some of the negative social stigmas of having tattoos have steadily evaporated, there are some companies that have strict rules for tattoos in the workplace. This poses a problem to young students with visible tattoos, because even though they are fully qualified for the

job of their dreams, if their future employers are strict with their dress code policies, they might be turned away.

Many companies are taking a more progressive approach to tattoos in the workplace, but there are still a large majority of companies that respectfully wish their employees to cover up their ink. Companies with a strict dress code are often worried about alienating clients when it comes to employees and ink, as well as trying to maintain a "professional" appearance.

"Corporate leaders most likely didn't grow up seeing body art that didn't have a negative connotation. But young people want to express their individuality, and this is

how they choose to do that," said Daniela Schreier, Chicago psychologist, in the article "Body of Work" by Rita Pyrellis, which brings to light the discussion of tattoos in the workplace and ethical treatment of tattooed employees.

Employers are allowed to pick and choose who they want to represent their company image, so long as they are not disrespectful to potential employees.

Ethan St. Peter, an art major at MWCC, said that he has never been turned away from a job because of his tattoos. The former Dunkin Donuts employee and current lifeguard with a tattoo of two birds on his outer forearm, said that usually people are pretty accepting of his tattoos.

"One time an older guy asked me why I got a bunch of funny ink in my arm, but that's about it," St. Peter said.

Marina Leone, a Radiology Tech major, explained that while her current place of employment has a very lenient tattoo policy, she would not consider getting a visible tattoo because she would like to pursue a career in the medical field.

"The medical field usually has a very strict tattoo policy, so if my tattoos are covered by scrubs I'm good," said Marina.

Patricia Brewerton in Career Advising had some solid advice for students with or who are considering getting tattoos.

"The bottom line is we want to be respectful of the work culture.

Research the work culture before you dive into an interview," she cautioned.

"Work culture," Brewerton explained, "is the work environment's rules for appearance and interaction." She said to look around at the employees when at an interview. What are they wearing?

"There is always a compromise with many companies. Students entering the workforce should always be willing to compromise, but make sure that you also feel like you fit in!" Brewerton said. When asked her opinion about tattoos in the workplace, Patricia Brewerton said that she is on the more "progressive side" of the argument.

EVENTS

Nomination papers to run for a seat on the Student Government Association (SGA) are now available in the Student Life Office, room 151, at the SGA booth or on-line at <https://iconnect.mwcc.edu>. Completed nomination papers must be submitted to the Student Life office by Wed., September 21 at 5pm.

Student Photo IDs Please bring one of the following photo IDs: a motor vehicle license or permit, a military ID, passport or a state issued identification card. ID cost is \$10. Returning students who already have an ID should stop by the MWCC library on the Gardner Campus or the front office on the Burbank, Devens or Leominster campus to have your ID validated for the fall semester at no charge.

CATS Programming Meeting (Campus Activities Team for Students) – 12:30 pm, Room W13. Come and join in on the fun of planning and running activities for MWCC students (i.e. Scary Karaoke, Fall Fest). For more information contact the Student Life office at studentlife@mwcc.mass.edu. 978-630-9148 or stop by room 151. Open to all MWCC students.

Intramural Activity - Open Gym - Try a class, take a swim, shoot some hoops, lift some weights, etc. Wearing appropriate clothes and footwear try out the Fitness & Wellness Center at no cost from 9am-9pm. Anyone under the age of 18 needs a parental signature.

Student Government Association Meeting – 12:30 pm, room W11. Come see them in action and consider running for a seat on the SGA. Meeting open to all.

"Get into the Game of Student Life" Scavenger Hunt – 11:30am-1:30pm, Café Hallway. Pick up your scavenger hunt list and start searching.

Fall Fest Welcome BBQ and Activities Fair, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm, Patio by South Café (or inside in the case of inclement weather). Come and enjoy the music of Grupo Fantasia, the BBQ, henna tattoos, caricatures, cotton candy, various novelties and the Student Club Expo. Novelties begin at 11:30 am (free while supplies last). BBQ and Expo begins at 12:30 pm (free food while supplies last). Open to all MWCC students, faculty and staff. Sponsored by the Student Life office, CATS (Campus Activities Team for Students), and the SGA (Student Government Association).

Constitution Day Celebration Activities:

Voting is "A Piece of Cake"

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm, South Café. Register to vote, pick up a pocket Constitution, participate in the SGA constitution quiz to win a prize or enjoy a free piece of cake (while supplies last). Sponsored by the Student Life Office, the SGA, CATS, and the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement. Open to all.

Day of Caring – will take place on the Gardner Campus. Save the Date! For more information contact the Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement, 978-630-9219, or mnicholson5@mwcc.mass.edu

Intramural Activity - Pickup Basketball - 6pm. Appropriate clothing and footwear are required. Players under the age of 18 need an adult signature to participate.

Lion's Den Student Center Open House hosted by the Student Government Association and CATS (Campus Activities Team for Students) – 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, Lion's Den Student Center

(located past the bookstore). Come and discover a great place to relax between classes. Free popcorn and a cold beverage (while supplies last). Sponsored by the Student Life office, SGA and CATS.

Student Government Association Nomination Papers Due – completed SGA nomination papers are due in today to the Student Life office, room 151.

Free Pizza for Evening Students, 5:00 pm--while food lasts, Cafeteria Hallway. Sponsored by the Student Life office and CATS (Campus Activities Team for Students).

.Film: THE MASK YOU LIVE IN

Wednesday, September 28
"The Mask You Live In" is a 2015 documentary film written, directed and produced by Jennifer Siebel Newsom. It premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. The film explores what Newsom perceives to be harmful notions about masculinity in American culture.

Student Government Association On-Line Elections -- Just log on to iconnect (<https://iconnect.mwcc.edu>) between Wed., Sept. 28, at 8 am and Thurs., Sept. 29, at 2 pm to vote.

SAVE THE DATES:

Oct. 6 – Film, Precious Knowledge 12:30 pm, North Cafeteria

Oct. 12 – Film, Lady Valor 12:30 pm, North Cafeteria

Oct. 13 – Sabor Latino – Music and Ethnic Food, 12:30 pm, South Cafeteria

Oct. 17-21 – Empty Place at the Table Exhibit South Cafeteria

Oct. 17 – It's Your Birthday Celebration 12:30 pm, Lion's Den Student Center

Oct. 19 – Monster Costume Show 12:40 pm, South Cafeteria

Oct. 25 – Mocktails and Fatal Vision Program, 12:30 pm, South Cafeteria

Oct. 26 – Film: The Hungry Heart 12:30 pm, North Cafeteria

Oct. 27 – Scary Karaoke 6 pm, South Cafeteria

Events are held on the Gardner Campus unless otherwise noted.