

# The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

## All-Gender Restrooms All Gone?

by Sophia Schlegelmilch

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Students and administrators are searching for alternatives due to a conflict with plumbing codes which required the all-gender bathrooms on the Gardner campus to be reassigned as single-gender faculty bathrooms.

According to Dean of Students Jason Zelesky, the school was informed that the bathrooms were not compliant with State Plumbing Code about two weeks ago, after an inspection related to other construction efforts. The school was ordered to make the changes immediately, said Zelesky, in order to avoid penalties, which could potentially include loss of the school's occupancy permit or closure of the building.

Students and faculty were notified of the re-designation of the restrooms in an email from Student Services on Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the day before spring classes began.

However, not all students found out about the changes in this manner.

“Unfortunately, I was alerted in the worst way,” said Chris Ordway, a Human Services major who discovered the alterations several weeks ago during January intersession. “I went to the all-gender bathroom . . . but as I was leaving the bathroom I looked behind me and noticed I had just walked out of the men's restroom.”

Ordway, who identifies as gender-nonconforming, said he walked around to each of the all-gender restrooms on the Gardner campus and discovered they all had single-gender signs on them.

“I felt invalidated and forgotten,” he said. “This was one of my favorite things about The Mount. I could finally use the restroom in peace without anyone labeling me.”

Ordway said he immediately complained to the administration and Student Services. While he emphasized that he felt heard and respected, he is still concerned that the matter is not being handled with appropriate urgency. “This could



Photos by Thomas Hill Jr.

The All Gender Restroom signs as they used to appear around campus (left) and one of the Faculty Restroom signs that have replaced them (right).

cause an interruption in our non-binary students' mental health as well as the possibility of students dropping out simply because of the fact they can't use the restroom comfortably,” he said. “It needs to be clear that this affects the emotional safety of our non-binary students.”

Zelesky described the pace of

emails and phone calls from concerned students as “constant.” He said he is making an effort to listen to and address each person's concerns individually.

Echoing Ordway's sentiments, he said the hardest questions to

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**“Restrooms Gone” >>>**

## Meeting the Needs of a Growing Industry



Photo by Betsabee Torres

A cannabis, or marijuana, plant.

by Sofia Schlegelmilch

ASSISTANT EDITOR

As the legal marijuana industry in Massachusetts expands, students can now prepare themselves for careers in cannabis with online cannabis education training courses.

MWCC has partnered with the Online Cannabis Education program to offer students the opportunity to train for positions in the cannabis industry.

According to Rachel Frick Cardelle, Vice President of Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development, the school's attention was first drawn to marijuana industry education when a member of Online Cannabis Education's staff contacted MWCC about a partnership. Frick Cardelle

said that by that time, the college had already been approached by several employers from newly-opened cannabis facilities in Fitchburg who were looking for trained employees.

“They're like any employer; they want an educated workforce,” she said. “This curriculum particularly struck us as being serious and useful for people to be educated about this and get real skills. This is an industry-related need that we're going to fill.”

Frick Cardelle also said that she anticipated there would be some objections to the addition of the program, but there were none.

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**“Cannabis Industry” >>>**

## A Welcome Back Message from President Vander Hooven



Photo courtesy of MWCC

Welcome back students!

As I sit in my office during every January, I go through several phases. The first phase is relief! It is so quiet around here and I can actually get caught up on all the work I've been falling behind on for many months. The second phase is excitement. I already start receiving emails about commencement planning, which seems entirely too soon but necessary nevertheless. The final phase is, "when will the students return!" I speak on behalf of the entire faculty and staff when I welcome you back to campus for the start of the spring semester. I can assure you that busy hallways, classrooms, and a Bemis Student Center filled with activity is far preferable to the peace and quiet.

We are here to support you and look forward to helping you reach your goals. I hope you will take me up on this offer. I enjoy meeting with students as often as possible. Feel free to stop by my office sometime to let me know how things are going, good or bad! I have also pledged to spend more time in the student center visiting students, attending club and organization meetings, and having pizza with the president events.

I wish you the very best this semester! Here's to hoping we don't have too many snow days.

Sincerely,

Jim Vander Hooven, President

## Go Green: A Global Warning!

by Dylan Cernoia

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

It's an undeniable fact that climate change is a major issue facing us today and MWCC is making moves to help students learn how to better respect the environment.

MWCC has an entire club dedicated to the environment called the Green Society. President of the Green Society and MWCC student Christine Nelson talked about the club's main goals saying "We aim to problem-solve. I love that the Mount has wind turbines and solar panels to reduce the school's fossil fuel usage. But there is more we can do for the environment."

The club has several upcoming projects including their "Purge the Plastic" campaign which will aim to reduce the plastics used on campus. "Plastic never leaves our environment—it may break down into smaller pieces, but it never decomposes like other materials," said Nelson. The new campaign will aim to sell free compostable water bottles. If you want to do more than buy a water bottle the club meets on Thursdays at 12:30 in the greenhouse on the Gardner campus.

"There are lots of effects that global warming has," said professor Tom Montagno. "Some of the more

obvious effects are rising sea levels and an increase in temperatures. Those are the two main effects that cascade down to lower effects." The rising sea levels are caused by the melting of the polar ice caps which, as they begin to melt, destroy the habitat of many arctic animals but also causes other low areas like Florida to flood more often.

As the temperatures rise it causes the ocean itself to become more acidic which will affect ocean life and also cause hurricanes to become worse because "warm water fuels a hurricane," said Montagno. One of the main contributors to these rising temperatures is greenhouse gasses which an article by the *BBC* found that the US was the second largest contributor of greenhouse gasses topped only by China.

MWCC has always put being "green" high on the list of priorities. President James Vander Hooven said, "There has been a long history of visionary leaders who have known the importance of being green. Both inside and outside the classroom and to our entire operational plant, MWCC has had this focus on being good stewards of our community and environment." Vander Hooven added that even when MWCC undertakes new construction



Photo courtesy of MWCC

projects they attempt to make them as environmentally friendly as possible.

At *MWCC.edu*, there is a page devoted to sustainability and the campus' history of converting to more environmentally friendly methods. The school saves a total of \$134,000 per year thanks to the many green energy sources on campus compared to the almost \$750,000

that the campus was spending on electricity in the 1990s, according to the website.

Vander Hooven also said that in the coming months there will be a new campus-wide initiative announced. "Going green is extremely important to me for lots of reasons," said Vander Hooven. "Foremost in my mind is the planet I am leaving for our children."

# Cannabis Industry

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These online non-credit courses have been offered for about two years. Frick Cardelle said enrollment has been steadily increasing since they were introduced, with 37 new enrollments in 2018 as of September. Currently, the program is available to students for the cost of \$249 for twelve months of unlimited access. Enrollment is not limited to residents of Massachusetts, though specific residency data on the current MWCC participants was not available.

The Online Cannabis Education curriculum consists of video instruction, e-books, quizzes, and a 250-question master exam. Learning is self-paced, with most students completing the program in “a few months,” according to the Online Cannabis Education website. Lessons cover topics such as “How to Grow Medical Marijuana,” “How to Cook with Marijuana,” “How to Open a Dispensary & Delivery Service,” and “Medical Marijuana Laws and Regulations,” among others.

Students who complete the program will finish with 9 separate

certifications, each representing one of the topics around which the curriculum is structured.

Certifications are “widely accepted at many cannabis businesses throughout the USA, Canada, Australia, Spain, and other countries as well,” according to the program’s website.

Access to industry-specific job boards is also provided to students enrolled in the program through the OCE website, and Frick Cardelle said that like any student, those enrolled in the cannabis career training program can use MWCC’s career services for assistance finding employment.

While MWCC does not currently offer any college credit courses specific to the cannabis industry, Frick Cardelle commented that “a lot of the skills that would make you a good botanist or a good chemist would be applicable to this industry.”

She also noted that business, marketing, or sales skills are just as applicable to the cannabis industry as to any other. “I wouldn’t be surprised if further down the line there is more specialization,” she added.

## Come Work for Us!

Interested in becoming a member of the *Mount Observer* team?

Contact us at [mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu).

Work Study positions are available to those who qualify! See Scott Farris in Admissions for details.



Students interested in learning more about the cannabis career training program can visit [www.OnlineCannabisEducation.com/mt-](http://www.OnlineCannabisEducation.com/mt-)

[www.massachusetts-community-college.edu](http://www.massachusetts-community-college.edu) or contact MWCC’s Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development department for more information.

# Can’t Sleep, Must Tweet: Limiting Screen Time

by Brittany Eldridge  
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Despite studies connecting increased screen time with various health issues, college students cannot avoid technology.

In September, Apple introduced Screen Time, an iOS 12 feature, which provides Apple device users with daily and weekly reports. According to the Apple website, these reports show users which categories of apps they use most and how much time they spend in each app. The feature lets users limit the time they spend on their device and on specific apps.

Briana Shelly, student, has the Screen Time app installed on her iPhone X. She said that it is interesting to see her average time spent differ from week to week.

According to the Screen Time feature, Shelly spends most of her time on Twitter, Snapchat, text messaging, and reference, such as using Google Maps, Google.com or checking the weather.

A 2018 report published in the *College Student Journal* stated that college students with high levels of screen time are more likely to suffer from sleep deprivation, anxiety, depression and obesity. These conditions can negatively impact students’ academic performance. The report explained that sleep deprived students had lower GPAs and that depressed students missed more classes and assignments.

The Apple website explains how Apple users can set limits on their



Photo by Jeremy Keith from flickr

Some people find limiting screen time difficult.

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“Screen Time” >>>

# From Incarcerated to Educated

by Sophia Schlegelmilch

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Even prison walls can't hold back MWCC's mission to serve the educational needs of the community.

Since 2016, MWCC has offered certificates in Small Business Management to inmates of North Central Correctional Institute in Gardner and Massachusetts Correctional Institute in Shirley.

According to Stephanie Marchetti, Director of Academic Support & Testing Services, the Small Business Management Certificate was chosen because it best supports the goals of these inmates upon release, many of whom want to start their own businesses as carpenters, electricians, or other trade professionals.

The credits earned through these classes also transfer easily into other business majors if these students want to further their college education after release.

For incarcerated students in the program, the learning environment mirrors the campus learning environment "almost exactly," said Marchetti. "They are completing work at the same level of rigor as they would at a class on campus."

Being inside the prison poses some unique challenges, however.

"The hardest part is trying to figure out how to run classes without the internet, for sure," Marchetti said.

Instead, teachers use offline databases to simulate the internet-based work that the courses require. Travel between different areas of the facility is strictly controlled, and "sometimes, due to what's going on in the prison, you can't take in paper and pencils, you can't take in paper clips, things can't be stapled," added Marchetti.

In spite of these challenges, Marchetti said the tutors love working in the prisons.

Janet Providakes, who tutors in both the Gardner and Shirley



Photo by Betsabee Torres

Massachusetts Correctional Institute in Shirley

Prisons, said her favorite part of teaching the inmates is watching them complete their projects.

"They are so creative," she said, describing a system of cooperative video gaming designed by one group of students. "I learned so much from their research. I never knew gamers could make so much money. So

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**"The whole goal of Mount Wachusett is to transform people's lives...and this really allows us to do that in a direct, obvious way."**

**-Stephanie Marchetti**

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really, it's educational for all sides."

Providakes began tutoring in the program just over a year ago because she felt it had the potential to change the lives of prisoners, many of whom did not have access to education when they were younger.

Though hearing about the inmates'

past experiences can sometimes be heartbreaking, Providakes is impressed by their determination to succeed in spite of their circumstances.

"It does make a difference," she said. "Now that they have this opportunity a lot of them embrace it completely."

In order to participate, inmates must qualify for a federal Pell grant. Their tuition is paid in full by the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program, a US Department of Education initiative that began in 2016 "to test whether participation in high quality education programs increases after expanding access to financial aid for incarcerated individuals," according to a Department of Education press release.

About 12,000 students in correctional facilities across the country will be able to enroll in educational programs through these grants. Currently, there is a federal ban on prison inmates receiving Pell Grants outside of the Second Chance program.

Additional support for Massachusetts prison educators is provided by an MIT-led educational

consortium, in which MWCC serves as an anchor school. The consortium received a \$250,000 grant in September 2018 from the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, according to a press release from the Vera Institute, a nonprofit organization which aims to end mass incarceration.

Earning an education while they serve their time reduces inmates' rate of recidivism, meaning they are less likely to reoffend – an assertion repeated by Marchetti, Providakes, Vera, and the US Department of Education.

"The whole goal of Mount Wachusett is to transform people's lives," said Marchetti, "and this really allows us to do that in a direct, obvious way."

The first class of students graduated from the program, which takes twelve to eighteen months to complete, in summer of 2018 and the first graduate is scheduled for release in January 2019.

According to Providakes, he is already making arrangements to continue his education at MWCC upon release.

**Let Your Voice be Heard!**

Send your stories, poetry, artwork, photography, or other content to  
mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu

# Screen Time

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most used apps. Apple users can schedule Downtime, or specific time periods where only phone calls and certain apps can be used. Users can use App Limits to block certain categories of apps, such as games or social networking apps.

Shelly said that the Screen Time feature made her more aware of how much time she spends on her phone. She added that she was shocked by how much time she spent and that it never really seemed that long. Shelly believes that she should change her screen time habits but does not think that she will be able to. She said she relies on her phone because it is easy to use and accessible.

Another student, Bianca Noelle, does not have the Screen Time feature but she still keeps track of how much time she spends on her phone. Noelle said that she spends

three hours a day on her phone. She spends most of her screen time on apps such as Instagram and Google.

Android offers a feature similar to Screen Time called Digital Wellbeing. The Android website stated that Digital Wellbeing is currently only available for Pixel devices with Android 9 Pie. The app shows how often Android users spend time in certain apps, allows users to schedule breaks, and monitors how much time users spend watching videos.

While college students cannot avoid technology entirely they can make use of Apple's Screen Time feature and Android's Digital Wellbeing feature to monitor and limit the time they spend on their devices. College students can use these features to limit their screen time. By limiting their screen time students may improve their health and academic performance.

# Restrooms Gone

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answer are from students who don't feel safe using either the men's or the women's bathrooms. He said he has replied primarily by reminding students that the school will enforce state law and respond immediately if anyone feels harassed, unsafe, or unwelcome in the restroom they have decided to use. In addition, he has offered security escorts and tours of the building to help students find bathrooms in less-travelled areas where they may feel safer using a single-gender restroom. He also researched temporary alternatives such as all-gender port-a-potties or restroom trailers.

Currently, the plumbing code requires that schools maintain separate bathrooms for teachers and students, necessitating that the school relabel the all-gender restrooms as single-gender faculty bathrooms. However, the school has the option to apply for a variance –

special permission from the state for an exemption to the plumbing code – to allow all-gender restrooms in the school without making the major changes to the building that would otherwise be required. Zelesky noted that a similar variance was recently granted to a UMass Amherst Residence Hall in October 2018.

President James Vander Hooven responded by announcing that a committee of faculty, staff, and students will be formed to investigate and petition for a variance. While the members of the committee have not yet been fully determined, they will be led by retired Senator Stephen Brewer, and students who are interested in a position on the committee are encouraged to contact Zelesky.

Zelesky said that in the meantime, the school is committed to transparency on this matter, and will be issuing regular updates as the situation develops.

# Support Systems for Recovering Addicts

by Alexa Russo

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Ramsey Clayter, MWCC alum and creator of "The Link," spoke about weakening the stigma of addiction through Narcan training, educational awareness, and holding more events on campus.

Narcan is a controversial topic, but Clayter believes Narcan training should be available for students who want to learn how to use Narcan. Narcan is covered under health insurances and is free with no prescription. "This would be an opportunity to save lives," said Clayter.

Clayter added, "There are always stigmas, we can never get rid of them." He pointed out that with more education on campus about addiction, stigmas may fade. He also believes social media, events, and awareness are ways to help break the stigma. Clayter thinks of himself as someone who "cares about students" and wants those who are fighting addiction to have a "healthy

recovery." Clayter is looking forward to achieving more goals for The Link, a program that helps students in recovery, and is hoping to make The Link sustainable so it can be a program used forever.

Michael, Substance Abuse program major and recovering addict, hopes to see Narcan training at our school in the near future. "The Link is an amazing program. I have seen it first hand help many," said Michael.

Michael believes that students who are willing to be trained to use Narcan should be able to and stated, "If they can give CPR classes to save someone's life, why can't they have a class to save a life with Narcan?"

Michael stated that everyone has a right to learn, saying, "Many students at our school would benefit from learning how to use Narcan."

According to Michael, the opiate epidemic is a topic that should be talked about more. He believes there should be more support services offered to students. He also stresses the importance of being there for

each other. "Support and check up on your friends and understand that addiction does not define who a person is," said Michael.

"As addicts people tend to think that we chose this life, but if people only knew how much we would give to feel comfortable in our own skin,

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**"There are always stigmas, we can never get rid of them."**

- Ramsey Clayter

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then maybe they would seek support instead of negativity which would help break the stigma," said Michael.

Michael hopes to become a recovery coach in the future so that he can help save lives. "MWCC has taught me a lot of what I know, but I believe Narcan training for people who want to learn how to use it should be accessible," said Michael.

Professor and defense attorney James Korman stated, "There

comes a time when we need to stop punishing people, and start saving people." He thinks that Narcan should be everywhere so that we can save lives.

Korman believes that addiction is not a choice. He said that many addicts are "friends, neighbors, and professionals." He believes that opiates destroy everyone equally.

"The classic dealers for drugs may be people who hold no criminal background, but instead are people who are suffering with an opiate addiction," said Korman.

Korman argued that about 85% of his cases have alcohol or drugs involved with them. He also hopes Narcan can be more widely accepted by society.

For more information on addiction call the Substance Abuse information and education hotline: 1-800-327-5050.

Guidance counselor Melissa Manzi and other counseling resources can be found in room 140. The Link is located in room 193.

# Two Heads Are Better Than One

by Brittany Eldridge

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Tutoring services offer to help students with homework, papers, and studying for exams.

Stephanie Marchetti, Director of Academic Support and Testing Services, said that tutors can help students become better note takers and test takers. She recommended starting with a writing tutor.

Tutors can help students prepare for exams, edit students' papers, and give students advice on how to study.

According to Marchetti, there are three types of tutors available to students -- peer, paraprofessional and professional tutors.

Peer tutors are current students, paraprofessional tutors have an associate's degree, and professional tutors have at least a bachelor's degree. Students interested in becoming tutors can fill out an application at the MWCC website.

Marchetti recently limited the number of tutoring hours students can receive per semester. Students can use a maximum of 20 hours of tutoring in person and 10 hours online per semester. Marchetti found that most students using more than 30 tutoring hours per week need other supports.

Tutoring is available in math, biology, chemistry, and physics every day from 10 a.m. until 4 a.m. through the online Thinking Storm program. Online tutoring services can be accessed online through Blackboard.

Students can meet with math and writing tutors in person at the campus library and the Academic Support Center, Room 128, Monday through Friday. If students would like tutoring in a different subject they can call ahead at 978-630-9333 or ask Academic Support Center staff. The tutoring schedule can be found online at the MWCC website.



Photo by Thomas Hill Jr.

The Tutoring Center in the LaChance Library at MWCC

# Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow

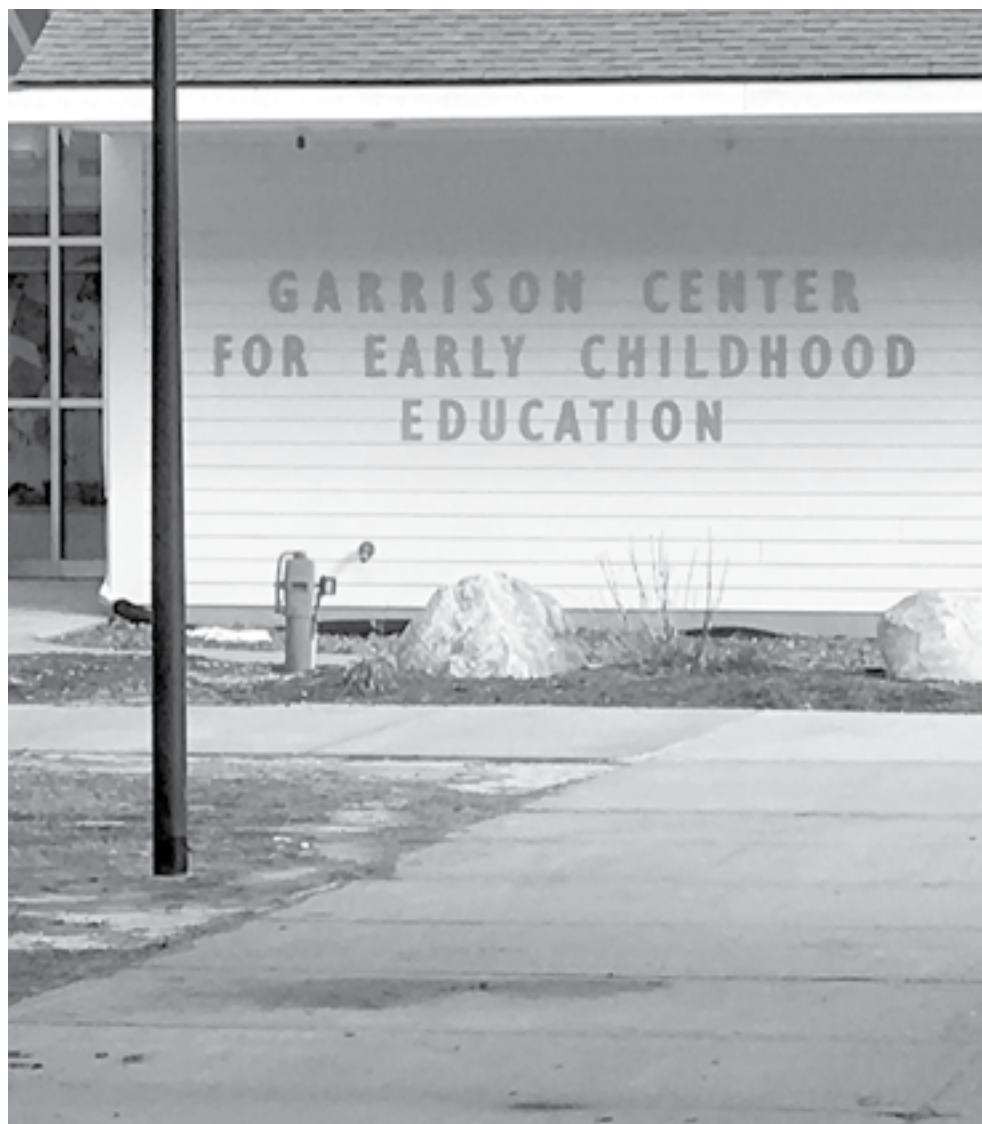


Photo by Thomas Hill Jr.

The MWCC Garrison Center for Early Childhood Education

by Gabriela Villa

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The Garrison Center is a federally licensed and accredited preschool available to students and faculty with children.

According to Laura Cameron, teacher supervisor at the Garrison Center, teachers tailor the curriculum to each child's needs, based on where they need more attention, or where they demonstrate ability or interest.

Part of the curriculum incorporates a program called "Seeds of Stem" which consists of two week-long studies, according to Cameron. The first week is called "Science Week" when children are taught concepts such as "sink or float." The next week is called "Problem Week" where they are presented with a problem and need to use what they learned in science week to solve the problem.

In the example of sink or float, the kids are presented with the problem of how to get cookies across water

without getting the cookies wet. They devise plans and construct flotation devices to get the cookies across the water. If the plan fails, they revise it and try again.

Along with math, science, and literacy objectives, the center also has social and emotional objectives such as establishing and sustaining positive relationships and participating constructively in group situations.

Teachers use the same model of problem solving from science studies to work kids through social and emotional problems. For example, if a child has a problem with sharing toys, teachers will go over and ask them "What is the problem?" and "What is the solution?" This is meant to empower children to work through problems.

Cameron has a son who went to the Garrison Center for a year and a half, and has moved on to kindergarten,

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"Garrison Center Childcare" >>>

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# Garrison Center Childcare

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and a daughter who attends the preschool now.

“I knew as soon as I started here I could just hear passion in their voices. They’re not just acting; that I had to pull my kids from where they were and put them here,” said Cameron.

“We really have the cream of the crop here with the teachers.”

Since being at the Garrison Center, Cameron said her kids have thrived socially and emotionally. They also built relationships with peers and other adults, and being in a large group setting has prepared them for kindergarten.

Alexis Johnston, a 19 year-old early childhood education major, observed teachers at the Garrison Center for her class.

Through her observations, she evaluated the environment of the classrooms and the teachers’ teaching styles, ranking their quality and effectiveness.

**“It’s not just about teaching per se, it’s about making an impact on the future of the kids you teach.”**

- Alexis Johnston

She connected many of her observations to the theorist Maria Montessori, who created an approach to learning that emphasizes active

learning, independence, cooperation, and learning that is tailored to each child’s unique pace of development.

“It’s not just about teaching per se, it’s about making an impact on the future of the kids you teach,” said Johnston.

Johnston said she let teachers read her notes on her observations, and gave them feedback on what they are doing well in terms of their styles of teaching.

Environmentally, Johnston evaluated how kid-friendly the spaces were - whether things hanging on the wall were eye-level to children and if there were enough mirrors in the classroom. “It is important for children to look at themselves at this age because it allows them to reflect on who they are and who they want to be,” said Alexis.

Most of the teachers are Early Childhood Education MWCC alumni.

According to Emily Verock, Family Development Coordinator at the Garrison Center, children from low income families or family members with disabilities get first consideration for the preschool.

Student parents don’t have to go to school full-time in order for their children to qualify, but depending on the number of classes they are taking, the cost can be reduced.

There are eight full-time faculty members, six teachers, and many other student-teachers since it is a “lab classroom” for Early Childhood Education students.

# Recycling: The Drastic Plastic Issue

by Cassie Roy

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Plastic- we all know it, we all use it, we all buy it, but that's the problem.

According to *plastic-pollution.org*, over 8.3 billion tons of plastic resides on our Earth. A study conducted in 2013 showed that an average of approximately 299 million tons of plastic gets produced and added onto the growing pile of waste each year. That same study estimated that by 2025 we would be able to line one hundred plastic bags per foot along every coastline on Earth. That's about 372,000 miles of land covered in waste that will take over five hundred years to be broken down and recycled back into the Earth.

This wouldn't sound so bad, at least the plastic disappears eventually right? Well, when plastic decays into our soil it releases the chemicals that were used to make it. This includes polystyrene, bisphenol A (BPA) and PS oligomer. All of these toxins are consumed or absorbed by animals causing them severe harm.

Despite the harmful effects, we all rely on plastic. Whether it's for hair product bottles, food packaging, to-go containers, straws, or water bottles, plastic is a heavily used commodity. But the plastic has to go somewhere when we are done with it.

We need to make a change and it starts with you. By switching to metal or glass products, not using straws, or buying your everyday products in non-plastic wrappings or recycled materials, the effects of change will soon take shape. Now, I understand if this all sounds intimidating or insurmountable. Don't let that deter you - no matter how small your contribution is it will make a difference and eventually it will become the norm.

Professors Heather Conn and Tom Montagno are doing their part to make a difference. They plan to sign our school up for a nationwide competition called "Recycle Mania" this March. The event will recognize schools in different categories that work to reduce their single-use plastics on campus. According to Heather Conn, their goal in entering

the contest is to "raise awareness and really drive our school towards increasing recycling and even decreasing single-use plastic altogether."

Conn has also been working to raise awareness of single-use plastics and healthy recycling habits amongst the staff who work at MWCC as well. She attends a potluck once a month for division meetings where they were using plastic utensils. Conn decided to bring in her old silverware from college and when the event was over she brought it home with her and washed it.

Conn says, "I'm just trying to make the faculty aware of what can be recycled, what can't be recycled and trying to get them to be better about recycling."

Thanks to the graphic design department we will soon have posters above the recycling bins depicting what can and cannot be recycled. This will not only raise awareness to promote good recycling habits but it will also be a constant reminder to be

aware of what we throw into those bins.

Plastic is found in large quantities in oceans and on land on such a regular basis that "our animals are becoming plasticized; they eat plastic, they ingest plastic," said Conn. "The food that you eat, especially fish, contains plastic, so you ingest, I believe, over 10,000 bits of plastic over the course of a year," Conn added.

We see how big this problem has become when larger animals such as whales wash up on our shores and we discover that their stomachs are filled with plastic.

Listed below are few sites that offer inexpensive plastic-free packaging and products made from recycled materials. The majority of these websites are also small family companies here in the U.S. who are trying to make a difference in the world.

Just remember to be conscientious of the products you are using that contain plastic. Reduce, reuse, and recycle - it really is as simple as that.



Photo by Thomas Hill Jr.

Two projects, Larry the plastic bag sea turtle (left) and the giant plastic water bottle (right) can be found on campus. Each promotes awareness of the growing problems with plastic pollution.



## Websites:

[www.myplasticfreelife.com](http://www.myplasticfreelife.com)

[www.recycling.com](http://www.recycling.com)

[www.lifewithoutplastic.com](http://www.lifewithoutplastic.com)

[www.packagefreeshop.com](http://www.packagefreeshop.com)

[www.floraandfauna.com](http://www.floraandfauna.com)





# Making tha Case on Being a Vegan

by Gabriela Villa

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

I went vegan when I was 19 and I have been vegan for 5 years. Like most people, I wasn't born a vegan. I was raised having meat, dairy or eggs with every meal.

I didn't go vegan because I liked the taste of meat or cheese any less than anyone else. I actually loved the taste of cheese and meats.

Whenever someone brought up veganism, like most people, I thought, "I could never do that!" I claimed I loved cheese too much, and to most of society that was an acceptable excuse.

Most of us think that consuming dairy and eggs is less harmful than consuming meat, which obviously involves the suffering and killing of animals. But the dairy, egg and even wool industries also end in the animals being killed once they cease being productive enough to turn a profit, and in the process these animals endure extreme acts of torture and abuse.

In the egg industry once a hen stops producing eggs at a profitable rate, she is molted. Molting is torturous for the hen. Hens are put into cages and deprived of food, water, and

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**We must ask ourselves: Is eating an omelet or a piece of cheese more important than the lives of the animals that were killed to make it?**

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sunlight for days at a time, putting them into a state of extreme mental and physical distress which causes them to lay eggs at a rapid rate, and often kills them. If they happen to



Photo by steve p2008 from flickr

**Cows, used to produce milk and meat products, are one of the many kinds of animals people attempt to protect by swithing to a vegan lifestyle.**

survive the molting, they are molted again until they finally die.

Another standard practice within the egg industry involves baby male chicks, who are unprofitable to the industry since they do not produce eggs, to be ground alive with steel blades within 48 hours of hatching.

Veal, meat that comes from baby cows and something that most people refuse to consume by ethical standards, is actually a byproduct of the dairy industry. In the dairy industry male calves, being unable to produce milk, are torn from their mothers at birth, locked up in tiny boxes where they can't even turn around, and kept that way the entire 8-10 month duration of their lives. This causes their flesh to become more fatty and they are then killed to make veal.

We must ask ourselves: Is eating an omelet or a piece of cheese more important than the lives of the

animals that were killed to make it? Was their suffering and death worth it?

Since animals are bred into existence because of our paying for things like cheese, eggs, leather, meat, and wool, we must recognize that we are therefore responsible for their lives--for their existence. The people who we "trust" to care for them, and who are "supposed" to be caring for them are the people whose jobs it was to make "farming" them as efficient as possible, and in order for them to make it efficient and cost effective, they have to perform horribly abusive practices on them.

In the wool industry, baby lambs have the skin around their anuses chopped off with sharp scissors, without anesthesia, so that their feces doesn't tarnish the wool. Baby piglets have their testicles torn out without anesthesia after 1-2 weeks of being born so their bodies can be

turned into bacon, pork, and ham.

Any caring, gentle, or compassionate part of those workers must be destroyed in order for them to carry out their duties effectively, and be able to keep their jobs.

So then, who is left to care for those animals? The whole of humanity has turned its' back on them. It is animal neglect on a mass-scale and we are all guilty.

## Learn More

<https://www.vegansociety.com/go-vegan/why-go-vegan>

<https://www.vegansociety.com/go-vegan/how-go-vegan>

<https://vegan.org/about-veganism/>

# Knowing Write Where to Start



Photo by Thomas Hill Jr.

MWCC's Literary Arts Journal, *A Certain Slant*, which is compiled and released annually.

by Brittany Eldridge

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Three local writers shared their advice on seeking a career as a professional writer.

Michelle Valois, English professor, stressed the writer's need for supports such as professors, friends, and relatives. Students can discover other supports through

online communities or by starting their own writing groups. Supports can provide students with advice on where to send work as well as feedback on how to improve their work.

Student writers can be proactive by starting their own book clubs. Valois suggested meeting with a group of writers at a library or coffee

shop. She also advised that students choose and discuss books in a book club of the same subject matter they wish to write in.

Valois mentioned that resources for writing can be found through virtual sources such as *Poets and Writers* and *New Pages*. *Poets and Writers* (pw.org) provides writers with places to publish their work, workshops, job listings, and writing communities.

*New Pages* (NewPages.com) provides writers with calls for submissions, blogs, contests, and other resources.

Joe Benavidez, former *Mount Observer* editor and published author, said students should expand their writing to include a variety of topics, formats and genres. Students can then combine different elements of each writing format to create their own works. Benavidez likes to experiment with multiple genres and formats including journalism, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, medical, and scientific.

Students can submit their pieces to online journals. Benavidez started an online journal called *Buck Off Magazine* (buckoffmag.com) which currently has ten volumes. The journal consists of poetry, nonfiction, prose, art and photography submissions.

Benavidez encouraged students interested in publishing their work to submit to every available outlet. He recommended that students research magazines before submitting to them. Students should be aware of the magazine's rules on ownership rights and forms of payment.

Aspiring writers can take advantage of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Benavidez is a member of multiple Facebook groups that were created by local writers. Sometimes magazine editors in these groups post publishing opportunities. Benavidez uses Twitter as a place to publish some of his short poems.

Zach Pavlosky, Editor in Chief for the *Mount Observer*, believes that writing for the paper helps students improve their writing skills. Pavlosky said that students learn how to write concisely and briefly.

As a Professional Writing major Pavlosky has completed a number of different writing classes. He learned a variety of writing styles in his Creative Writing, Technical Writing and Journalism classes. In the Creative Writing course students learn how to write poetry and flash fiction. The Technical Writing course focuses on writing professional memos, letters, instructions, reports, and proposals.

Writing for the *Mount Observer* allows for students to write about a variety of topics. Pavlosky has written articles about blood drives, Women's History Month, the Academy Awards and President Trump. Students also learn how to write headlines and properly structure articles.

Working as an editor can improve students' work. According to Pavlosky, editing someone else's work helps writers identify common errors in their own writing.

## FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED!



### Transfer Information Session Dates

Tuesday, February 19, 2019, 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

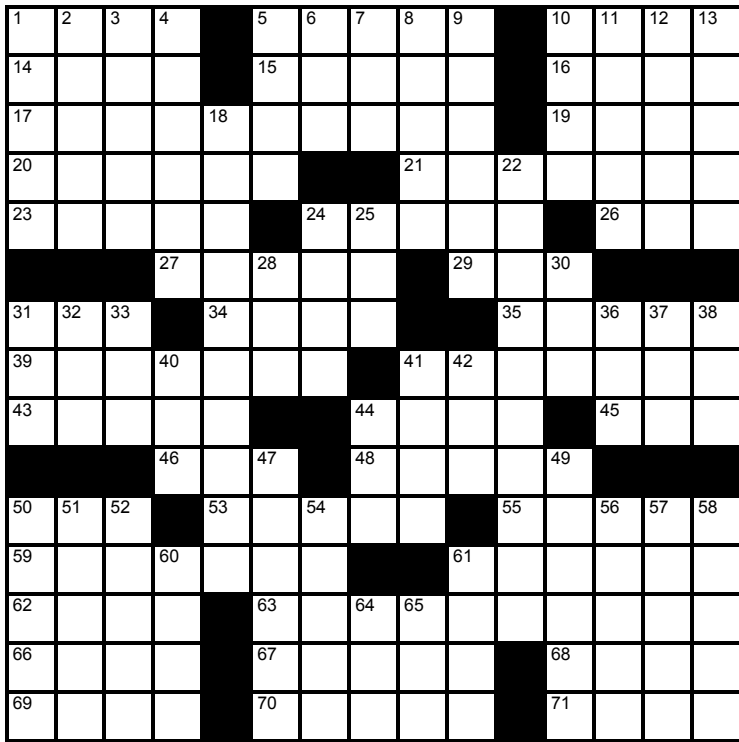
Wednesday, May 8, 2019, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Wednesday, May 22, 2019, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

BAYPATH.EDU

588 Longmeadow Street, Longmeadow, MA 01106 413.565.1331 transfer@baypath.edu

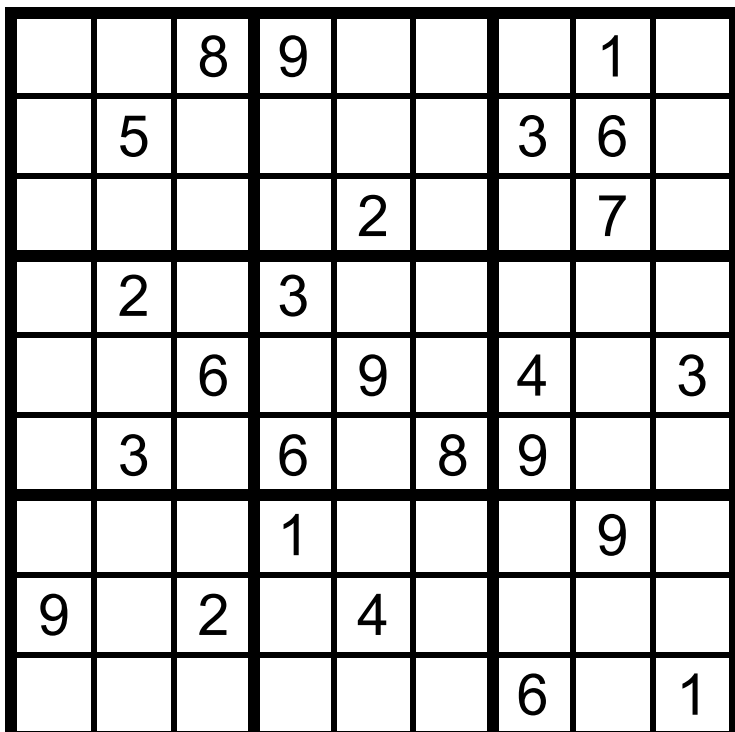
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|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Across</b>         | 44 Way of life        | 3 Contradict             | 31 Hotshot          |
| 1 Sunblock ingredient | 45 Admiration         | 4 Actress Silverstone    | 32 Edgar Allen      |
| 5 Office worker       | 46 Singleton          | 5 Irritation             | 33 Blunder          |
| 10 Circuits           | 48 Terrestrial lizard | 6 Child                  | 36 Crete mountain   |
| 14 Eve's son          | 50 King of Judah      | 7 Ostrich relative       | 37 Condensation     |
| 15 Wanderer           | 53 Social class       | 8 Low-water mark         | 38 Dutch commune    |
| 16 Promised land      | 55 Organic compound   | 9 Ukrainian seaport      | 40 Brazilian port   |
| 17 Concern            | 59 Air out            | 10 Toxic element         | 41 Storm            |
| 19 Adjutant           | 61 Store sign         | 11 So long               | 42 Gr. letter       |
| 20 Knitted fabric     | 62 Fem. suffix        | 12 Shakespeare Character | 44 Caress           |
| 21 Feminist Duncan    | 63 Wolf spiders       | Don                      | 47 Rel. holiday     |
| 23 Beer mug           | 66 Solar disk         | 13 <i>Slamming</i> Sammy | 49 Take for granted |
| 24 Explode            | 67 Spam medium        | 18 Harmony               | 50 Regions          |
| 26 Turf               | 68 ___ Blanc          | 22 Document supplement   | 51 Fight            |
| 27 Actress Moorehead  | 69 Variety            | 24 Conveyor              | 52 Subsequently     |
| 29 Consumed           | 70 Answer             | 25 Consumption           | 54 Dishonor         |
| 31 Emulator           | 71 Conclusions        | 28 Pinch                 | 56 Claw             |
| 34 Provoke            | <b>Down</b>           | 30 Compass heading       | 57 Antelope         |
| 35 Actor's line       | 1 Yesteryears         |                          | 58 Reposes          |
| 39 Pervert            | 2 Terminate           |                          | 60 Hire             |
| 41 Ebbed              |                       |                          | 61 Exclusively      |
| 43 Unnatural          |                       |                          | 64 Knock            |
|                       |                       |                          | 65 Be in pain       |

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9. There is only one possible solution.



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THE MOUNT OBSERVER  
VOLUME 13, ISSUE 5,  
February 6, 2019

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*The Mount Observer* reserves the right to edit and condense all submissions. *The Mount Observer* is a member of the College Media Advisers, Inc.

**Printer:**  
Turley Publications Inc.

**Mount Observer Advertising Policy:**

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**EAST WING GALLERY** at Mount Wachusett Community College  
SPRING 2019 EXHIBITIONS, GALLERY TALKS & EVENTS  
All exhibitions & events are free and open to the public.

**GARDNER MAKES:**  
Steamroller Prints  
Chair City Community Workshop  
February 1 - March 12

Gallery Talk & Presentation by  
**Tracie Pouliot**  
"Make Art on the Street! Collaboration,  
Community Building & Printmaking"  
Monday, March 11 at 12:30-1:30 p.m.



*In the glass cases:* Metal sculptures by  
**Matthew Evald Johnson**  
February 1 - March 12

Welding demonstration at artist's studio  
Thursday, February 28 at 12:30-2 p.m.  
138 Holyoke Street, Easthampton, MA

< Coils #7, 28 x 24 x 16 inches  
Ectomorph, 22 feet tall x 4 ft. x 4 ft. >



**Artist Presentation and Q & A:**  
"Let's Get Real: What It Means To Work In Animation"  
by **Katie Taccone**

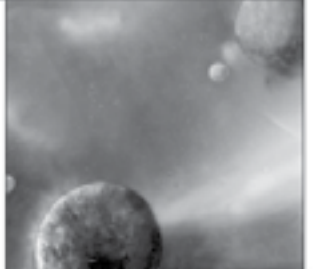
Co-founder & Creative at OpenPixel Studios, a virtual animation production studio, in Springfield, MA. Her experience ranges from AAA game titles to commercials. She gives new insights to students & professionals alike who are pursuing a career in Animation.

Wed., March 6 at 12:30-1:30 p.m. (Multipurpose room 115)

36th Annual Regional High School Art Exhibition & Competition  
April 2 - 19 Reception & Awards: Thurs., April 11 at 6-8 p.m.

48th Annual  
**MWCC Student Art Exhibition**  
Work from all foundation & advanced art courses  
May 14 - 24

Reception: Wednesday, May 15 at 3:30-6 p.m.  
Camilo Almarales, *One Song*, 2018, painting, 48 x 108 in. >



## Get into the Student LIFE

**1/23**  
Student IDs  
10am - 4pm  
Room 151

**2/28**  
Zombie  
Mardi Gras  
Carnival  
6pm-9pm  
South Cafe

**2/27**  
Film Series:  
*No Turning  
Back*  
12:30pm  
North Cafe

**2/26**  
CATS  
Programming  
Mtg., 12:30pm  
Room W12

**2/25**  
Stress Less  
- Learn to  
Meditate  
North Cafe  
12:30pm  
& 1:15pm

**2/25**  
SGA  
Meeting  
Murphy  
Room  
12:30pm

**1/24**  
Student IDs  
2pm - 6pm  
Room 151

**1/28**  
Student IDs  
9am - 11am  
Room 151

**1/28**  
SGA  
Meeting  
Murphy  
Room  
12:30pm

**1/29**  
CATS  
Programming  
Mtg.,  
12:30pm  
Room W12

**1/29**  
Student IDs  
3pm - 6pm  
Room 151

**1/31**  
Welcome  
Back Fair  
South  
Cafe  
11:30am-  
1:30pm

**2/5**  
CATS  
Programming  
Mtg., 12:30pm  
Room W11

**2/5**  
Evening  
Student Pizza  
with the  
President  
4pm Student  
Center

**2/6**  
Bamidele  
Drumming  
Circle  
12:30pm,  
South Cafe

**2/21**  
Zombie  
Mardi Gras  
Mask  
Making  
12:30pm  
South Cafe

**2/19**  
CATS  
Programming  
Mtg., 12:30pm  
Room W11

**2/18**  
President's  
Day NO  
Classes

**2/14**  
Valentine's  
Chocolate  
Sampler  
12:30pm,  
South Cafe

**2/13**  
Film Series:  
*Black  
Panther*  
12:30pm  
North Cafe

**2/12**  
CATS  
Programming  
Mtg.,  
12:30pm  
Room W11

**2/11**  
SGA  
Meeting  
Murphy  
Room  
12:30pm

**Spring 2019 Leadership for Life program** - a series of eight short presentations or service opportunities on topics that will help you feel more comfortable and be successful at MWCC. From the first one in January to the last one in April, *Leadership for Life* will help you. Upcoming workshops are being held: January 30, February 6, 20, March 6, 14, 20, April 3, 17. Most workshops are held from 12:30 to 1:30 pm in the Murphy Room. **For more information:** Contact Sarah Savoie in Student Services at [ssavoie7@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:ssavoie7@mwcc.mass.edu), 978-630-9855 or stop by room 141.

**Intramurals**

*Pick-up Basketball* - Tuesdays, 3pm-4pm

**Open Gym** - Come try out all that the Fitness Center has to offer. Use the equipment, try a class, or swim in the pool. On the following dates: 1/29, 2/6, 2/11, 2/21, 2/26.

**Intramural Soccer** - Dates TBD

**Please see the reverse side for detailed information.**

For further information or to inquire about an event, please contact the Student Life Office at [studentlife@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:studentlife@mwcc.mass.edu) or 978-630-9148. Full details may also be found on the Student Life webpage at <http://mwcc.edu/studentlife/>

**Student Photo IDs Contact the Student Life Office for an Appointment 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 spring semester at no charge.

**Student Government Association Meeting** - 12:30 pm, Murphy Room. Come see them in action and consider running for a seat on the SGA.

**CATS Programming Meeting (Campus Activities Team for Students)** - 12:30 pm, Room W11 or W12. 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](mailto:studentlife@mwcc.mass.edu). 978-630-9148 or stop by the office located in the Student Center. Open to all MWCC students.

**Welcome Back Fair** - 11:30am-1:30pm, South Cafe. Check out the many clubs and resources on campus, FREE novelties and FUN!

**Free Pizza for Evening Students** - 4:00 pm, Student Center—Come meet with President Vander Hooven and enjoy a slice of pizza. Sponsored by the Student Life Office and CATS (Campus Activities Team for Students).

**Bamidele Drummers and Dancers Drum/Percussion Circle** - 12:30 pm, South Cafe. Join the fun and take part in the drumming circle as we celebrate Black History Month.

**Valentine's Chocolate Sampler**, 12:30pm, South Cafe. Enjoy an assortment of chocolate goodies and celebrate Valentine's Day.

**Film: "Black Panther"**- 12:30pm, North Cafe  
After the death of his father, T'Challa returns home to the African nation of Wakanda to take his rightful place as king. When a powerful enemy suddenly reappears, T'Challa's mettle as king -- and as Black Panther -- gets tested when he's drawn into a conflict that puts the fate of Wakanda and the entire world at risk. Faced with treachery and danger, the young king must rally his allies and release the full power of the Black Panther to defeat his foes and secure the safety of his people.

**Zombie Mardi Gras Mask Making**, 12:30pm, South Cafe.  
Get ready for the Mardi Gras Carnival by making your mask today!

**Stress Less - Learn to Meditate**, 12:30pm & 1:15pm (half hour drop-in sessions, North Cafe). Enhance your concentration and productivity. Participants will sit in chairs and wear regular attire. No eating in the class, please. Classes are taught by MedWorks Corporate Meditation Programs.

**Film: "No Turning Back"** - 12:30pm, North Cafe  
After losing his wife and house to Hurricane Mitch in Honduras, Pablo (Jesus Nebot) illegally immigrates to the United States in an attempt to offer a better future for his five-year-old daughter Cristina (Chelsea Rendon). A few months later, it is Cristina's birthday and Pablo borrows his boss' truck to surprise his daughter at school and take her to watch the movie Tarzan. On the way there, a dog jumps into his path and Pablo quickly jerks the wheel. He loses complete control of the truck and a tragic accident occurs. Wild thoughts frantically cross his mind - he has no license, is an illegal immigrant, and has fatally injured a little girl. If he waits for the authorities to arrive, this accident could cost him what he values the most: his daughter and the betterment of her life.

**Zombie Mardi Gras Carnival**, 6pm-9pm, South Cafe.  
Come celebrate Mardi Gras with dancing, food, and fun! CASH PRIZES. FREE and open to students and their one guest age 14 and over. FREE Face Painting starts at 5:00pm.

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

**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 5am-9pm. Anyone under the age of 18 needs a parental signature.

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

Save the Date:  
Pizza with the President - 3/5/18  
Thinkfast: Women's History - 3/14/19  
Spring Break - 3/18/19-3/22/19  
Alternative Spring Break Service Project - 3/20/19  
Film Series: 1984 - 3/27/19  
SGA Nomination Papers Due - 3/27/19  
Herstory Women's Appreciation Event - 3/28/19  
Events are held on the Gardner Campus unless otherwise noted.