

The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

Plagiarized and Jeopardized: A Warning

by Zach Pavlosky

Dean of Students Jason Zelesky and Creative Writing professor Michelle Valois have worked in education long enough to understand the ramifications of plagiarism and have, accordingly, adopted beliefs as to why they think students resort to such an act and how to quell it.

When asked about the severity of plagiarism, Zelesky firmly stated that “It is a form of academic dishonesty and a formal example of cheating.” He said plagiarism can be a “challenging concept” for some professors to tackle due to the different ways that a student could plagiarize.

“Technology has changed our ability to recognize plagiarism,” said Zelesky, noting that the use of electronic devices during a test has become more prevalent than simply glancing at someone else’s paper.

A student, who wished to remain anonymous, admitted to cheating during a math midterm by getting answers from his phone. “I didn’t see the harm,” the student said.

In the 16 years that Valois has been teaching English courses, she has only had one experience with a student who plagiarized material. An entire poem was printed from the internet and the student turned it in, claiming it as their own work. The poem was instantly recognized by another student.

“The poem wasn’t even that good,” said Valois. “The internet has made plagiarism very easy, but it has also made plagiarism easier to detect.”

Valois was alluding to Safe Assign, an internet-based system used through Blackboard that sends a submitted paper through the Global Reference Database and formulates a percentage based on the likelihood of whether the submitted work was plagiarized or not.

A student, identified as “T”, said he/she was tempted to plagiarize an English paper but chose not to because of Safe Assign. “Having to check the Safe Assign box on Blackboard is the only reason I wrote that paper,” the student

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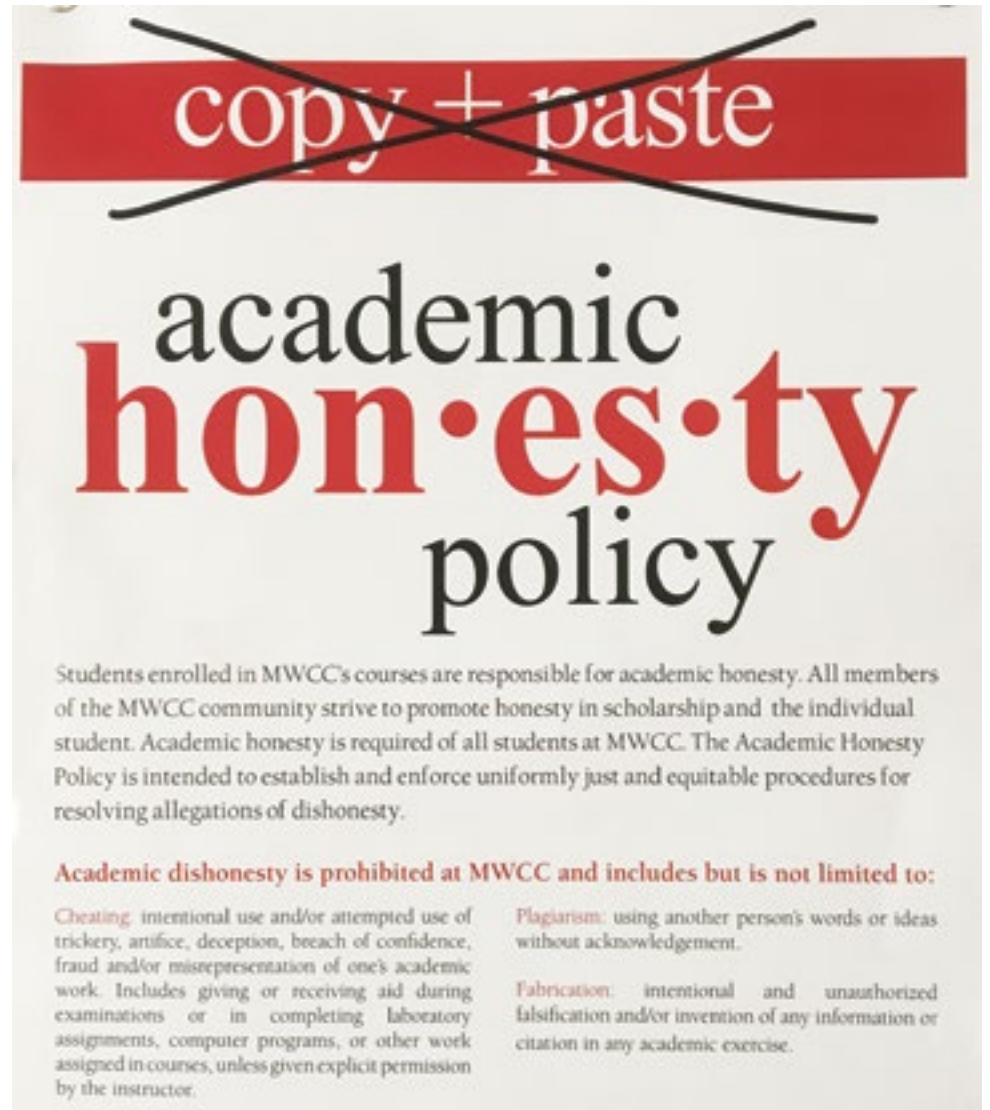


Photo by Thomas Hill Jr.

A poster outlining Mount Wachusett Community College's Academic Honesty Policy, including the definition of plagiarism.

Diversity Club Cultivates Culture



Photo courtesy of MWCC
Melissa Bourque-Silva

by Jasmin Ruiz

In efforts to increase appreciation and support of diversity here at the Mount, Melissa Bourque-Silva, Director of National Workforce Diversity Pipeline, proposed the idea of building our very own multicultural center on the Gardner campus and it's a go!

No timeline has been determined for when the project would begin. The plan is for the project to be fully funded and self-sustaining, but in the meantime Bourque-Silva is seeking out extra funding sources and grants that would be interested in supporting the project.

Currently, efforts are being made

to locate a space where building of the center can begin.

“The biggest roadblock right now is finding an actual space,” said Bourque-Silva.

In the meantime, she encourages students to give their feedback on what they would like to see in the center and what services they would like it to provide.

Bourque-Silva said, “This is for the students and I want them to be in the process of what it's going to look like.”

The ALANA Club (African, Latino, Asian and Native American Club), a club formed to celebrate the diversity of our student body, is

excited and has hopes that the center can be a new home for them, and clubs like theirs, to meet and embrace diversity on campus.

“There's a lot of diversity on campus but it's not always represented,” said David Thibault-Munoz, one of the club advisors.

Here are just some of the nations students are from at the Mount-

Albania
Algeria
Argentina
Belarus
Cambodia
Cameroon

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“Diversity Club” >>>

Diversity Club

>>> continued from page 1

China
Colombia
Cyprus
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Germany

The club feels that the center would be a great opportunity to show off cultures that at times may be overlooked. They feel that everyone, no matter their race or ethnicity, should feel welcomed and represented in the center.

"I feel like it should be a safe haven to talk about things like culture and stuff. Somewhere where you can feel like you can actually talk without being afraid," said Monica Cayenne-Robinson, President of ALANA.

Tremaine Pinnock, Secretary of the club thinks it would be a good idea to have artwork and phrases representative of important or famous people from different cultures or even an exhibit made by our very own art students.

Julie Aguiar, Vice President, made a suggestion that there be activities for stress relief held by the center around midterms and finals, like small drum circles and games from different cultures.

The executive committee of the club is one of the many ways that they show their embrace of diversity with members from places like Grenada, Puerto Rico, Jamaica,

Brazil, Dominican Republic and Ghana.

ALANA has hosted events like:

- *Black Lives Black Lungs- A discussion about how big tobacco particularly exploits the black community.*

- *Fundraiser for Puerto Rico for the hurricane relief where they raised \$300 and had live music and free Salsa dancing lessons.*

- *Partnered with SAGA (Straight And Gay Alliance) to start a conversation on the intersectionality of race and gender oppression.*

- *Daylong Coloring Outside the Lines Conference*

Every year a trip is organized to attend one of the cultural festivals in New York. Last year the club visited Harlem and attended a Multicultural Festival. This year they will be attending the Loiza Afro-Puerto Rican Festival in East Harlem NY.

Students can speak with to Bourque-Silva on the third floor in suite 316 to give feedback, ideas, and complete the climate survey, which was emailed to all students (have to be 18+ to complete this survey and completed at least one semester at the Mount). The climate survey helps to see where the school community is at with respect to diversity. Bourque-Silva also has surveys asking for ideas that students have on how they would want their culture to be represented (artwork, music, famous quotes, color schemes etc.).



Photos by Brianna Stevens and courtesy of MWCC, respectively

Professor Michelle Valois and Dean of Students Jason Zelesky

Plagiarism

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said.

Valois's plagiarism policy for her Creative Writing class states, "Using the words of someone else without giving credit is plagiarism. Students who cheat or plagiarize will receive an 'F'. According to Valois, a student who is caught plagiarizing "won't flunk the course" but "will flunk the assignment." A first-time offender will flunk the assignment but will be let off with "a warning" as far as further action from a higher authority goes. However, they will flunk the course if they are a "repeat offender."

Zelesky said that he has seen plagiarism go down "significantly" in the 20 years that he has been teaching and working with students.

When asked why he thinks some students turn to plagiarism, Zelesky said "being busy" and "stress" are factors. "I understand that, but I challenge that the work is still important," said Zelesky.

Valois echoed Zelesky's sentiments, saying, "I think it's time... Many of these students have families, jobs and social lives outside of school." She also thinks that some

students "sell themselves short" and "just want the grade."

Valois believes that plagiarizing should be a learning experience for the offender stressing that, if caught, it shouldn't be "just about punishment" but also "about education." If a student is caught plagiarizing, Valois maintains that it is more important to teach that student why what they did is wrong rather than punishing them outright.

Like Valois, Zelesky stands resolute in the belief that all students deserve a second chance. Zelesky stressed that being caught plagiarizing isn't always a "do or die" situation. "I'm a fan of looking for opportunities for students to learn and grow," said Zelesky. "Most cases are accidental and maybe 25 percent are complete laziness."

Zelesky believes that talking with students about plagiarism, teaching proper citation, and working with tutors can help them avoid pitfalls. "For some students, it's just a matter of unlearning bad behavior from high school," said Zelesky. "The stakes only get higher," warned Zelesky.

**Welcome Back BBQ
and Club Expo
Thursday, September 13th
12:30PM – 1:30PM**

Come Work for Us!

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

Contact us at mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu.

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

PROFILE

A New President, A New Precedent



Photo courtesy of MWCC

President James L. Vander Hooven

Welcome to the Fall Semester!

A Welcome Back Address from President Vander Hooven

I want to welcome you to Mount Wachusett Community College. I hope you had a great summer. For those of you who are returning to the Mount, I think the first thing you might have noticed, or at least your car noticed, is the parking lot and roadways have been resurfaced! This was a much-needed construction project that took most of the summer to complete. What a big difference!

I believe you will find success at MWCC. Our faculty and staff are ready to help you achieve your academic and personal goals. All you have to do is ask. There will be many challenges ahead for you. I cannot or will not promise that it will be an easy journey. But it will be fulfilling and successful if you let your instructors and our staff know about your challenges and obstacles. We will do our best to find solutions and suggestions to overcome those challenges along the way.

Again, welcome back and have a great year!

Jim Vander Hooven

President

by Ayana Brodeur-Edmonds

It has been an eventful year for the community since President James L. Vander Hooven took office at MWCC. After a year of changes, President Vander Hooven and the community share their thoughts on where MWCC is now.

When Vander Hooven first looked into MWCC, he says that he was very impressed by the students and faculty. He “loved” the programs offered at MWCC, and said, “It [Working at MWCC] just seemed like a really great opportunity for me.” So far, his time at the college has been enjoyable. Vander Hooven has gotten to explore the community, and get a “deeper understanding” of what goes on here at the Mount.

President Vander Hooven entered higher education because he knows that academics can be a struggle, and he wished to help others. The President himself struggled academically and faced several obstacles throughout his educational career. “Just keep showing up,” Vander Hooven advises students, “The quickest path to not succeeding is to not show up. I could’ve quit school because I wasn’t getting good grades, but I kept showing up.”

One obstacle he faced was his battle with depression. Vander Hooven has a deep level of empathy for students suffering from mental illness. “It is something that a lot of people struggle with,” he believes.

“I am happy with how people have welcomed me here,” Vander Hooven says. MWCC student, Sean Krieger, and faculty member, Robert Mayer, welcome the new president with positive feedback and advice.

Sean Krieger, Natural Resources Major and CATs club treasurer, has seen many changes in MWCC. He has attended the school since 2011. Krieger says, “Thinking about how the school was before to now is very nostalgic.” Krieger described the President as “an awesome person”. Krieger “loves” the school faculty, but describes the community as “double-edged”. He explained his feelings about the community; “It’s

good, but it depends on who you surround yourself with.”

“Community is the most important,” Vander Hooven claimed when asked about the most important part of a learning environment. He hopes for students to feel respected and valued, and that graduates are prepared for their next steps.

Robert “Bob” Mayer, Director of Veteran Services and adjunct Photography Professor for eighteen years, praised Vander Hooven for his ethics. “First I’ll tell you,” Mayer said, “I like Jim [President Vander Hooven] a lot and I have great respect for him. He is extremely supportive of our veteran students.”

When asked how Mayer felt about MWCC’s former president, Daniel Asquino, compared to Vander Hooven, Mayer says, “They have different leadership styles. I prefer the current leadership style because I feel that the students and staff have more input, even if they’re only asked their opinion.” Mayer feels that the “overall vibes” of the school are now positive, and that Vander Hooven has taken the right steps in improving the environment.

When asked what Mayer defines as a good leader, he described, “A leader is someone who gets people to work for him, and to do things because they want to do it instead of because they have to do it. A leader wouldn’t necessarily ask someone to do something that they wouldn’t do themselves.”

Krieger’s advice to President Vander Hooven was, “Keep engaging, pop in to the clubs and see how they’re run. See how we run events. See what gets put in to the events and get involved.”

If Krieger were President Vander Hooven, he would better the promotion of student services. Krieger said, “I have a lot of hopes for Jim’s presidency but he’s only one person. I remember him saying ‘Just do what you gotta do’.” Krieger also believes that Vander Hooven does not tolerate discrimination of any sort, “or he wouldn’t be president”.

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“New President, New Precedent”
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Spin Street Cred Into College Cred in Hip Hop Class



Photos by Maurisa Weld

Ashlaw, student/s dancing

by Maurisa Weld

Did you know you can “break, pop and lock” and have it count towards a degree? If you always wanted to bust a move, Street Dance/ Hip-Hop is now offered as an accredited elective with no prior dance experience required.

Choreographer and instructor Brittany Ashlaw has been dancing since she was two years old and has been teaching dance arts for 10 years. Ashlaw said teaching at the college is different than at studios because

she can incorporate discussion and dance history into the movement lessons.

While students learn dance moves, they also learn where the foundations of the movements originated from.

Students learn “breaking” skills (in motion) and “freezing” (standing still), across-the-floor moves, and a two-minute choreographed routine. “The best part is when my students, some who have little-to-no dance experience, achieve goals within the course that they never thought



possible on day one of the semester,” Ashlaw said.

“Going into challenging exercises with positive energy and attitude greatly affects your outcome and I find those moments when a student conquers a new freeze or intricate movement to be the most rewarding in my class.”

Jharel Jerez, graduate of Methuen High School, said the dance course is his favorite class. “I just like being able to move,” he said. Jerez is also pleased that the course has taught

him how to do a “Baby Freeze,” which is a beginner’s floor position using your hands for balance and alternating a knee on your left elbow.

Marissa Cartier, Monty Tech 2018 graduate, also said Ashlaw’s course has been her favorite so far in her college career. Cartier is one of few to have prior dance experience. Though she has been dancing since the age of two, she said that she is challenged in every class.

Fighting the Addiction to End the Affliction

by Maurisa Weld

Mental Health Counselor Melissa Manzi deals with opiate addiction on a regular basis. Though students don’t usually seek out treatment with Manzi, she said students come to her for help when loved ones are battling addiction.

An Opiate Addiction Awareness Seminar was held and focused on, in addition to addiction, mental health. “I’ve had several students who have watched their parents overdose,” Manzi said, “and others who have had a total of three friends die to opiates.”

Abnormal Psychology students contributed poster boards of information displaying various

“We can destroy stigmas through awareness. We need to have these discussions about mental health, so we can learn what we can do to make a difference.”

—Melissa Manzi

mental health conditions as part of a Service Learning project. Noel Ntoro, a Psychology major, said

Service Learning projects are the best route to go in college. “When you’re informed and care about the topic, it doesn’t really feel like a project at all.” The Service Learning students advertised the event and had a large turnout, including photographers and the mayor of Gardner.

All who attended the Opiate Addiction Awareness Seminar signed a pledge at the door. By signing the pledge, guests promised to promote acceptance and constantly challenge mental health stigmas.” Stickers with the saying “Know science, No stigma” were handed out. Manzi said “We can destroy stigmas through

awareness. We need to have these discussions about mental health, so we can learn what we can do to make a difference.”

Manzi hopes to see support groups for the children who are forced to be around opiate addiction. She said there are numerous support groups for those actually battling the addiction, but no “age-specific” groups for those family members, especially children, watching it happen. At the end of the seminar, Manzi invited anyone who needed emotional support to come speak with her.

FEATURE

by Christine Nelson

Current parking lot construction will bring improvements to campus parking lots, yet requires the removal of the community garden.

All parking areas will be repaved. Parking in front of the Fitness Center will expand to accommodate more parking spaces—an additional 24 regular spaces and 11 accessible spaces. The community garden near the Fitness Center will be removed to allow for this expansion. A catch basin system will be installed to improve drainage. Parking lots B, C, and D remain the same size, yet will gain over 100 additional spaces as lines are redrawn for more modern cars. (Current lines are based on 1970 car sizes.) There will also be new lighting.

Robert LaBonte, Vice President, Finance and Administration, said “With the changes we have seen here on campus, such as the Student Center, parking improvements are part of an evolution into a new place. It’s exciting.”

Parking lot construction costs will be about 5.4 million dollars, which will be funded by the state, with former Governor Deval Patrick’s Bond Bill. LaBonte said “These changes are long overdue. They are not something the college can do on its own. I am really happy.”

Six years ago, a small group of Natural Resource students started, then oversaw, the organic community garden. Plots of 20x15 feet were rented to the general public as a chance to grow their own vegetables, flowers and herbs. The cost was \$20 per plot, per season. Community participation was considered active, with some people renting two plots in a season. The college’s website, MWCC.edu, advertises the organic community garden as an example of sustainability on campus.

Tom Montagno, Dept. Chair of Natural Resources/Professor of Biology, said that the local community was happy to have a place to garden and admits that it is too bad the school is losing the garden. “We are considering other locations on campus,” Montagno said. He added that replacing the garden may take time. LaBonte indicated that he would be open to the possibility of relocating the



garden if there was enough interest.

When asked, students may not know about the community garden or its location. Despite this, there is interest in keeping the garden.

“I definitely think that we should find another location for the garden. I think it is nice to have,” said student Maurisa Weld. Sierra DeWalt, President of the Green Society, added “The community garden is a great place to get together and share appreciation for the environment.” Padraic Ferriter, student, also said, “The garden is a pivotal part of the community. It should be showcased in front of the buildings, indicating MWCC’s commitment to the environment.”

Photos by Brianna Stevens

(Left) The newly completed parking lot outside of the fitness center, and the location of the previous Community Garden.

(Below) The view from outside Lot C as the repaving reaches its conclusion.



Students Sound Off on Safety

by Alexa Nogueira

As the fight to prevent more school shootings continues, students, Chief Kolimaga, and Dean of Students Jason Zelesky each give their perspective on campus safety.

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the least safe and 10 being the most safe), the average safety rating across the Gardner and Leominster campuses was an 8.14. Students were asked to offer their different concerns and comforts about campus safety. One of the most common concerns among the students was how open both the Gardner and Leominster campuses are. “It’s a safe school, but it’s concerning that they let anyone wander in and out,” said Katina Grimson.

Laney Jackson, who’s attended classes at both Gardner and Leominster, also shared concerns about the openness of each campus. “I feel safer in Gardner, weirdly enough, because there’s more room and more windows to see who’s where,” said Jackson. “In Leominster, I don’t feel as safe because I only know of the one entrance, and there’s more places around, like BJ’s and the RMV. It feels like anyone can walk in, even more so than Gardner.”

Chief of Campus Police Karen Kolimaga, who has been MWCC’s Chief of Police for twelve years, assures students that there are resources in place to protect them. To ensure safety on campus, there are ten armed police officers, who are all trained annually to meet Massachusetts State Police standards. The campus police patrol the parking lots, perform safety escorts, work with students who have specific security needs and will help students develop their own personal safety plans.

The campus police also work alongside the Dean of Students and campus counselors in the C.A.R.E. team, in which they meet monthly to assess threats on campus but will also meet more often if necessary. Additionally, there are two officers trained in R.A.D., and two officers trained in the ALICE drill.



Photos by Brianna Stevens

(Top) Campus Police patrol the parking lot at MWCC.

(Bottom-Left) An exit sign marks one of the many ways to escape the building in an emergency, in this case in the student center, leading to the front lawn.

(Bottom-Right) A fire extinguisher in one of the breezeways.

ALICE drills are specific to active shooting situations and aim to teach students and faculty what to do in the event of an active shooting. The sessions occur several times a year and last for two hours. For students who cannot attend physical ALICE drills, Chief Kolimaga urges they visit the iConnect homepage, scroll down to Campus Security, and click on ‘Home,’ which will direct students to a list of all emergency response documents. Also on that page is a video titled “RUN. HIDE. FIGHT.,” which is six minutes long and explains what to do in an active shooter situation.

“If you can’t go to ALICE training, you at least have time to watch this video,” said Chief Kolimaga.

Dean of Students Jason Zelesky also dedicates himself to ensuring all MWCC campuses are a safe and inclusive community. Zelesky works closely with the campus police and also participates in bystander programming, which aims to encourage students to lend a hand to peers in need. “As a community, we’re all responsible,” said Zelesky. “If it’s just law enforcement, we’re never going to win. We’ll always be reacting.”

At the core of his work as Dean of Students, Zelesky’s main goal is to help students overcome any challenges and succeed academically. Zelesky feels that helping students succeed and making them feel safe all comes down to students feeling like they’re important. “One of the most important things about a safe and inclusive environment is letting students know they matter.”

Creating an environment in which all students feel seen, safe, included and important is what Zelesky strives to do every day as the Dean of Students. But, he also encourages students to help fellow peers in need, whether that be by comforting someone who’s upset or calling the police during an emergency. “We can make a choice, step in or step out,” said Zelesky.

Poems

by Maurisa Weld

Sonnet: Behind a Locked Door

Everyone has an identity
that goes beyond first names.
Though no one wants to unlock their destiny,
for they are too busy kicking around, playing life's games.
Fate is behind a locked door.
We wait in hopes to find a key on the ground.
Not changing who we are, making the
same mistakes as before
we wait for the door to open when we
could easily knock it down.
Pick up the pieces, life is a puzzle.
At first attempt you may not feel like a victor
but with perseverance you will defeat the struggle
and see you have made a beautiful picture.
We should be forever moving forward,
with the knowledge from the mistakes left behind.
Sometimes it's hard to leave rock-
bottom and we feel cornered,
only seeing the negatives in life, we are blind.
Living life with a disguise-
hiding your imperfections,
Is a life full of lies!
View bumps in the road with a Kintsugi perspective:
Flaws like failures and scars
are nothing to be ashamed!
They are part of the story that makes you who you are
and the world would be better if they were embraced.

Villanelle: Dumb Duo

Devastated, the dinosaur drunkenly stumbled
into a half-dreaming parakeet flying lazy low.
Downward ascending deep to the dark floor went
the dumb duo.
"DANGIT!" the dino yelled.
"Do you watch where you dawdle?" the bird
chirped.
Devastated, the dinosaur drunkenly stumbled.
Parakeet darted to the canopy.
He perched on a twig too weak to hold him. SNAP.
Downward ascending deep to the dark floor went
the dumb duo.

Pantoum:

Peace is disturbed, it approaches.
"knock, knock"
Anxiety.
It takes over.
"knock, knock
"who is it?"
"anxiety."
"no ones home"
Who is it?
The being who controls your
thoughts.
No one's home,
yet I feel something watching.
The being who controls your
thoughts
makes your heart pound and
hands sweat.

EAST WING GALLERY ~ Mount Wachusett Community College
FALL 2018 EXHIBITIONS, GALLERY TALKS & EVENTS



Constructions an exhibition of work by
Robert G. Osborne
September 5 - October 2

Reception: Friday, September 7, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Gallery Talk: Thursday, September 27
12:30-1:30 p.m.

<The River Styx T.A., 2017, latex, balsa, wood on panel, 40 x 40 in.

50th Anniversary of the Art Department
An Exhibition of Work by the founder of the art program & original art faculty

Jean Tandy - John Pacheco - Gene Cauthen

October 11 - November 8

Reception: Friday, October 26 at 3:30-6:00 p.m.

Background: Watercolor by Jean Tandy. In 1968, she founded the Art Dept.



Recent Work by
Keith Hollingworth

November 15 - December 6

Gallery Talk: Monday, November 19
12:30-1:30 p.m.

<White-Weight, 2017, mixed media, 30 x 24 in.



Ceramic work by art student

Kevin Oxford

November 15 - December 20

Reception: Wednesday, December 19
3:00-5:30 p.m.

<stoneware teapot, raku fired, approx. 11 x 7 x 7 in.



Exhibition of Student Work

from *Painting II & Drawing III*

December 18, 2018 - January 25, 2019

Reception: Wednesday, December 19
3:00-5:30 p.m.

<Jackie Lane, *Street*, 2018, ink on paper, 12 x 9 in.

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New President, New Precedent

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Vander Hooven says that his life work has put him in close proximity to see the negative impacts of discrimination and racism. President Vander Hooven was once the president of a tribal college in Arizona. He described his experience there as, “one of the most educational experiences of [his] life to learn about their history and culture. To be able to be a part of that for a few years was really life changing.”

Vander Hooven recognized that discrimination is a complicated issue, but feels that one of the best solutions is education. The President believes that if someone is given the

chance to tell their story, that gives people the opportunity to “advance their thinking”.

Not only does Vander Hooven cover topics such as discrimination and mental illness, he also deals with the threat of on-campus violence.

In light of the recent school shootings, Vander Hooven says, “They’re horrible. It’s complicated. We’re doing everything we can, and everything that we know of to have a safe environment for our students.” This type of situation hits close to home for Vander Hooven, being a father of three young children. As both a president and a dad, it hurts him that shootings are a concern for

people.

Vander Hooven comments on the safety of MWCC campuses, “I’m never going to say that I’m completely satisfied. I’m never going to say that we can guarantee that nothing is going to happen because we are prepared.” He states that we must remain as prepared as possible for such crises, and that if there are any troubling signs, then something must be done.

When referring to the March for Our Lives, Vander Hooven believes that young people should have a voice and they should be heard. “I support students’ rights to take a stand,” he says. President Vander Hooven says

that a big part of his philosophy is “Standing up to justice.”

Vander Hooven most importantly wants his legacy to be that he cared for the lives and challenges that MWCC students faced. He wants to do anything in his power to help students overcome their struggles.

Despite the challenges the nation faced over the past year, President Vander Hooven has managed to create a positive and safe environment for MWCC faculty and students. The community looks forward to Vander Hooven’s work with MWCC, and to see how far he can bring the school.

Let Your Voice be Heard!

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