Mercer celebrates 50th anniversary

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Mercer County Community College. MCCC has not only expanded from the original Trenton campus, but has also grown as a stepping stone for students' post-high school education in Mercer County.

In honor of this milestone, MCCC has planned many events in celebration. On April 15, the MCCC Foundation hosted the “50th Anniversary Gala” to mark the inauguration of the college’s sixth president, Dr. Jianping Wang and a student scholarship fundraiser. Mercer’s art gallery is also showing an exhibit in September titled “Mercer Arts at 50,” highlighting the work of current faculty, alumni, and former faculty. Mercer County Community College’s roots can be traced as far back as 1890 to an evening drawing school, further transforming in 1898 into the Trenton Technical School of Science & Arts, located in 120 North Broad Street. At the turn of the century the school would move to 38 West State Street and a year later in 1901 be renamed once again to the Trenton School of Industrial Arts.

In 1947 the school would be renamed to the Trenton Junior College and School of Industrial Arts; it would take 15 years until TJC would be accredited by Middle States. Finally, in 1966 Mercer County Community College would be established, and Dr. Richard K. Greenbrier would be our first president. Although MCCC’s appearance has changed throughout the years, sentiments regarding attendance have not. Current second year student Ryan Venturro shared how he feels about attending MCCC, “I like the professors, they know what they’re talking about and care about the subjects they teach,” he continued, “I’m a business administration major, and I think Mercer would benefit me in the long run... It’s a smart, beneficical move and a good school all around.”

Mercer County Community College has grown and developed into a thriving campus for those looking to better themselves with a diverse range of programs to select from. This includes nursing programs, communications programs, business programs, and much more. With growth and development in only 50 years, who knows what’s next for Mercer County Community College.
Navigating the pitfalls of transfer credits at MCCC

By Svetlana Craft
Junior Reporter

Imagine working hard, completing your core classes and electives so you are able to transfer to your top school. When the time finally comes, you find out you are not able to because you do not have enough credits. This is a very possible situation when not all classes transfer out of Mercer County Community College (MCCC). This is exactly what happened to Emily Bernstein, a student who transferred from MCCC to Kent State University. While speaking to her she stated, “I was never told that certain remedial courses wouldn’t transfer. I was only informed that credits wouldn’t. ‘I was only informed that credits wouldn’t transfer, but not according to her major. Later on, Laura discovered her advisor is not related to the specific major. This advisor is only a professor of some of the classes that she needs to take in order to complete her degree. There are many stories like Laura’s at Mercer County Community College, but there are also cases where students either don’t think they have an advisor, don’t know they need one, or their advisor is not helpful. This is the case of Manni, a student majoring in Liberal Arts, who didn’t get the right information from her advisor and took many classes that she didn’t need for her major. Manni ended up staying one more full semester at MCC, not because she got the advice she needed, but because she had the credits transfer. In a survey conducted by The College Voice, it revealed that most MCCC students do plan on transferring to a four year school. The start to this process should take place from the very beginning of your first semester at MCCC.

Majority of students have an idea of certain, at least the top schools they consider transferring to, but before students make their schedules, they need to visit the transfer services and/or visit www.njtransfer.org. The transfer services at MCCC are there to guide students through their pathway to success, do not hesitate to make an appointment with one of the administrators for some extra help.

While talking to Laurene Jones, who is the Director of Transfer and Career Services, she told me that students who do plan on transferring from the very beginning should get in contact with the transfer department so they could make the process as easy as possible for the students. Jones mentioend that most students come into MCCC and chose classes without speaking to anyone first. Jones also added that students should be checking their emails and coming to the transfer workshops instead of just avoiding it until the last minute. The Transfer systems that students can be informed about credits and what classes do and do not transfer to top school she mentioned, all students need to do is go to the transfer department and ask for the help they are able to provide.

Billy McCarthy, who is a current student at MCCC, explained his situation and made a statement that he has not gone to any transfer workshops nor talked to an advisor about his credits transferring. McCarthy commented, “MCCC does not tell us that core classes and electives may not transfer to certain schools, they only tell us that remedial courses do not.” Approximately 12,000 students take at least one credit course each year at MCCC. With that being said, while surveying the students, I found out if they plan to transfer, graduate, or take a few credit courses may not transfer, they were shocking. Eight out of forty young adults stated they would graduate at MCCC and the rest said they would transfer. Out of the 12,000 students that enroll each year, that is about 8,800 considering to transfer out of the community college.

Not knowing which classes are the right for you makes it possible for your next step towards success to be delayed. “I was only informed that credits wouldn’t transfer, but not according to her major.”

Finding the elusive MCCC adviser

By Jaleesa Graham
Junior Reporter

This semester, Mercer County Community College introduces the class registration waitlist. This system, used in many colleges, is new to Mercer and allows students to put themselves on a waitlist in the hopes of registering into a class that is already full. It is a great option for students that may have waited a little too long to register for classes, and need a specific course to complete their degree or even an option to those that need to make last minute changes to their schedule.

Although many courses are full at Mercer, there are many students that need to take the same one. Waitlist is a great opportunity to give all students a chance. Many times, students register for a class and cannot make their tuition payment on time or do not attend the class. Now, those on the waitlist have an opportunity to take a course they need. When a seat is available, Mercer will send you an email, in order from the first person to the last. You then have 24 hours to register for that course and take the open seat or it is passed to the next person on the waitlist. There may however, be a downside. You can get stuck on the list if you are actually eligible to take this course, if the prerequisites needed for you to take this course, have been completed. Once the system reaches your name on the waitlist, and you attempt to register for the class, you may then find out you have not taken the required classes or degree requirements, and to help ensure each student has a chance, the system automatically places students on the waitlist.

The current system was put into place to assist students meet their degree requirements, and to help ensure each student has a chance, the system automatically places students on the waitlist.

In a survey of 30 MCCC students, they were asked, “do you have an advisor?”, 46% answered yes, 20% said no, and the other 20% said they had no idea they needed an advisor. Looking at this survey, the majority of students know that they have an advisor, but what about the other students? This shows that the advisement system needs to make sure that everyone at Mercer and Career Services knows that they have an advisor, and what their advisor’s role is. This is important to know the student to make sure they meet their degree requirements, and to help ensure that each student has a chance, the system automatically places students on the waitlist.

In the Department of Communication and Social Media, Barry Levy has been at MCCC for ten years as a professor and advisor for many students. He was questioned about the advisement system, in the matter of being an advisor, “what is the most important advice for a student to be successful at Mercer Community College?” He first mentioned, it is important to know the student to have a bridge of trust between student and mentor. As an advisor, it is important to know your student so it is important to know him/her, to have communication and trust. Professor Levy gets upset when he hears stories about students who had to take more classes because they didn’t had an advisor who really cared about the student and their personal goals.

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MCCC Men’s soccer team loses 2-1

By Ousman Joof
Senior Reporter

The Mercer County Vikings’ Soccer team walked off the West Windsor Campus’ soccer field with a loss September 14th, on Wednesday night in a game against Camden County Community College’s soccer team. Jared Rodgers (#9), the most seasoned player on Mercer’s team, was able to secure one goal for the Vikings in the beginning of the last hour of the game. However, Victor Machado (#23) and Ricardo Oliveira de Souza (#15) of Camden’s team both scored a goal during the earlier half of the game. It seems that MCCC’s Men’s Soccer Team, who last year was ranked second in the nation in the NJCAA Division I Men’s Soccer National poll, were not able to bring the same type of game that made them a virtually unstoppable force last year to Camden on the night of the 14th. The irony that can be found in this loss is that last season, Mercer defeated Camden 2-0 in October of 2015. During one of the practices a week before the game, The College Voice interviewed Julian Lucuni, a sophomore at MCCC, in his last year playing for the MCCC Vikings. While interviewing him, Julian described winning as “being in heaven” and even admitted to having sleepless nights over previous games he played where Mercer lost. If Julian’s teammates and coaches have the same mentality as him, then this loss may lower the personal morale of the team. Overall, going into the more important games of the season, Andre’ Marcus, a student at MCCC and one of the fans in attendance, told the The College Voice post-game that seeing his school team lose “kinds sucked.” The cold breezes that began to blow and the rain that began falling from the dark sky in the last few moments of the game, seemed to synchronize with the palpable aura of disappointment that radiated from Viking fans once the realization of imminent defeat settled in. Despite the losing outcome of their game against Camden, Mercer’s soccer team’s standing and future prospects will not be greatly affected. While Mercer’s athletic director, John Simone, did say, “We’re always happy to win,” he added that it’s just a regular season game. Both Simone and Coach Widmarc Dalce admitted that Camden’s team had more experienced players and a better defense respectively. For the Vikings’ sake, maybe this loss will show them which areas they need to improve on as a team in order to come away from their next game with a victory.

Campus welcomes new Vice President of Academic Affairs

By Ousman Joof
Senior Reporter

This summer, Dr. David Edwards began his journey as the new Vice President of Academic Affairs at Mercer County Community College. Dr. Edwards is coming from two previous colleges; Hudson County Community College and Middlesex County Community College.

He worked various positions at both colleges, from being the Dean and having the responsibilities of the Humanities and Social Sciences Department at Hudson, to becoming the Dean of Arts and Sciences at Middlesex.

Dr. Edwards began his journey into education at the Louisiana State University to obtain his undergraduate degree in English, his Masters Degree at the University of Texas at Austin, and Doctorate here in New Jersey at Rowan University. Similar to many other students pursuing a career in teaching, Dr. Edwards didn’t have an idea on where he should begin. He started by asking many of his teachers on where to start. Most suggested to study education which will prepare you for a bit of everything and beyond. In an interview with The Voice, Dr. Edwards mentions his English Literature teacher by the name of Francis Pistorius who was the one to really get him interested in learning. He states “Maybe I wasn’t the most serious student back then when I was a sophomore in high school, but we took a course in American poetry and he [Pistorius] would read the poems out loud in class, he would have us interpret the poems on what they meant and something about that process really light my candle in me and I got really excited about it, so from that point on I said to myself I wanted to stay here I didn’t know education was going to be it but I really liked school.”

Already living in Princeton for the past 11 years, Dr. Edwards was quite familiar with Mercer County Community College [MCCC]. The college system in New Jersey has given him the opportunity to learn a lot about MCCC without actually being here, but he does state that “It is different once you are actually here.”

Dr. Edwards also mentioned “my first impressions were very good [describing MCCC]. I’m extremely impressed by the faculty dedication to subject matter, the faculty that teach here are truly committed to students success.”

In his interview with the newspaper, Dr. Edwards stated many changes he would like implement while he is here at Mercer. His main focus being developmental education for those student not entirely prepared for college level courses and shortening the amount of time student are in those class. Dr. Edwards stated “there are systems right now in practice that do that, they are called Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP). The way Dr. Edwards described how it will work is students will take the pre english course or pre math course with their target course at the same time, so if you pass one you’ ll pass the other and move on from there. With a Title 3 grant the school has received hopefully some of the funds could be put towards the program.

President Jianping Wang expressed that “Dr. David Edwards brings a great deal of dedication, enthusiasm, and community college experience to Mercer. His commitment to our students and his administrative approach with accountability will enhance our service to our students.”

Dr. Edwards reminds students that “my door to this office is always open. Please come talk to me about what you know, what worries you, what you are concerned about, and if something you need you are not getting, my door is always open.”

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The Beast: A film starring Emma Watson as Belle.

On finding your seat at Mercer's Kelsey Theatre, you, the viewer, are greeted by silence. But the moment the viewer begins to relax in the chair, the stage explodes with sound and color, ensemble actors running across the stage, and an incredible orchestral piece fills the auditorium, all painting a picture to tell the audience that "The Heat is On in Saigon," and soon enough, you, the viewer are lost in it yourself.

Miss Saigon is a feast for the eyes and ears. With brilliant music and choreography that pulls the viewer in with an ambitious and dramatic scale that is rare and refreshing to see, and complements the drama and scale of the story perfectly.

Miss Saigon is a take on the Madame Butterfly story set in the Vietnam War, rather than the original World War II, and was first produced in 1989, making its Broadway debut in 1991. Through the efforts of Pinewood Production company, and through the ambition and effort of director Lou J. Stalsworth, the Kelsey Theatre has the chance to tell this engaging and thought provoking tale. Miss Saigon is a story where the characters are tied to each other through adversity, to quote audience member Shawn Rupp of Egg Harbor, NJ. Miss Saigon does this by following a seventeen year old bar girl named Kim (Lianah Sta. Ana) and her brief intense love affair with Christopher Scott (Michael Schibilia), a US Marine sergeant and an embassy guard during the Fall of Saigon in 1975.

Between the drama of the war, and entourage of a young Vietnamese woman and her future to the United States, the music and choreography that pulls the viewer in with an exciting and inspiring tale. Miss Saigon is a feast for the eyes and ears. Music and dance, and whether one comes to entertain viewers, but also the eyes and ears. With brilliant music and choreography that pulls the viewer in with an ambitious and dramatic scale that is rare and refreshing to see, and complements the drama and scale of the story perfectly.

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On their final day in Poland, a few travelers went back to Birkenau. Upon entering the cold, dark gates of Birkenau Concentration Camp, a student found a thimble while another found a coin from 1938. The coin was imprinted with a swastika and a Nazi eagle on the front. It was very worn down and rigid, and the imprint was almost illegible. These two items were then logged and archived, making these travelers a part of history. 

Mercer County Community College held a study tour to Poland this past May, which was open to students first, then faculty, and last, community members. Taking fourteen travelers, the trip lasted from the 12th to the 22nd and came with a planned itinerary. The trip was organized around a Holocaust theme and consisted of the visitation of Warsaw, Krakow, and Oswiecim. Discovering a thimble and a coin from 1938 was only one of the many stories told by the travelers upon their return. They each had countless memories to share and could not wait to pass them along. While most trips are planned by Mercer, this one was done entirely by Dr. Jack Tabor and Dr. Craig Coenen. Both professors teach classes that surround the Holocaust; Dr. Tabor is the professor of, “Literatures of War and Conflict: The Holocaust” and Dr. Craig Coenen is the professor of, “The Holocaust and Other Genocides.” They both attended the last trip to Poland in 2013 and did not like how the tour was set up. This year they took the initiative and decided to plan it themselves. Being one who has more affordable allowed for more student and community travelers. With the re-designed itinerary, travelers were able to spend the beginning of the trip getting to know each other, and the sites built up to the most gut-wrenching artifacts there: Auschwitz and Birkenau (the working and death camps). 

The first three days were spent in Warsaw where they walked the city, were introduced to Polish culture and mouth-watering food, and inhaled more of Warsaw’s history. They then traveled to Krakow for two days where they visited the Jewish Quarter (a Jewish town) and its synagogues, the Jewish ghetto, Oskar Schindler’s factory, a place where 1200 Jews were saved, and the Plaszow forced labor camp, a very dark, cold place. The final two days were then spent in Oswiecim and the Auschwitz and Birkenau Concentration Camps.

Out of the fourteen travelers, there are professors at Mercer, nine were students (some have transferred to four-year universities), one American Honors Advisor, and one a member of the Mercer County Holocaust Genocide Resource Center. Each of which had their own reason behind going on the study tour, and the perspective they had while there.

The professors of the study tour, Tabor and Coenen were asked what a professor could take from a study tour, being already so informed on the subject. They both gave the same answer; “when you have a passion for the subject, one can never be fully informed.” Craig Coenen says, “As someone who was actually there [Poland], my passion only grows. [For students] talking to someone who has been to these places and has seen these things is so powerful and enhances my teaching.” They were also asked what they wanted students to get out of the study tour. Jack Tabor answers, “[I wanted them] to have an experience that changes them. To give them something they could not get out of a textbook; an unmediated experience to wander and to discover.” To hope that this was something students would think about for years to come. After talking to students, it seems like that’s exactly what was accomplished.

A collage of the experiences they had happened.

They are still coated with dirt and a Nazi eagle on the front. It was imprinted with a swastika and a constant reminder of the atrocities that have happened.

They brought home with her a piece of Auschwitz, a piece that she will never be able to forget.

Another student, Erica Sost, fourth year Liberal Arts major, also adds how she continues to think about the trip on a daily basis. While in Auschwitz, there was an area that showed the hair of women that was shaved off. Erica distinctly remembers a blonde poyntail because it matches her hair color. When she came home and tried to get her hair cut, Sost says she had a panic attack because it brought her back into that room of Auschwitz and the image of the blonde poyntail. The travelers will forever be affected by the experiences they had in Poland.

Each person was also asked what the most rewarding part of the tour was. Some like Sheldon Eisenberg, member of the Mercer County Holocaust Genocide Resource Center, had roots in Poland he wished to discover. Both of Shelly’s parents are Holocaust survivors, so his motivation for going and the rewards were a bit more personal. Alyson Krawchuk, American Honors Advisor, had a similar story. Poland is where her family was raised, she was able to gain knowledge of the culture of her family. Others on the trip however, found an incredible bond between the rest of the travelers.

Beforehand, most travelers were strangers. But by the end of this trip these fourteen travelers created such a strong bond. “All can relate, regardless of background” says English professor, Laura Knight, explaining why they created such a quick, strong connection. Going through an emotional experience such as this can unify people so quickly. The relationship they formed was because they could all relate to one story or another. In Auschwitz, there was a picture hanging up of two sisters. It explained a story of two sisters that refused to be separated and this story touched the hearts of two sisters that were on the trip Mallory and Bridget Phelan. Almost immediately, they began crying. Others from the group comforted them by holding their hands and hugging them. Everyone made sure to mention how two weeks after they returned home, everyone got together again. The meeting reiterated how close this experience brought them, and the new friends that were made. Mercer County Community College offers opportunities to study abroad and study tours. The tours are short term while studying abroad is for an entire semester. The program is already outstanding but there is much more to come says Andrea Lynch, professor and coordinator for the Center for Global Opportunities (GO!).

The central focus has been on study tours and semester abroad for students, but in the near future they would like to bring attention to the existing work of infusing curriculum with the education of other cultures and to support and expand campus internationalization efforts, making the campus a multicultural place learn and grow.

The study tour to Poland was one that travelers will never be able to forget. Not only were they able to receive unmediated experience to connect with their in-class education but they created strong friendships along the way. With future expansion of study tours taking place the educational and social possibilities are endless. “Hate comes from fear of the unknown,” says Alyson Krawchuk. “If people could have more experiences like this, the world would be a happier place.”
### The Candidates' Positions

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<th><strong>Hillary Clinton</strong></th>
<th><strong>Donald Trump</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IMMIGRATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>TAXES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enforce Immigration laws humanely.</td>
<td>Have individual income tax rates: 12, 25 and 33 percent.</td>
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<td>Promote naturalization.</td>
<td>Repeal the Death Tax.</td>
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<td>Defend President Obama’s executive actions—(DACA and DAPA).</td>
<td>Make a childcare tax only capped to a certain amount while the rest won’t cover.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduce immigration reform with a pathway to full and equal citizenship.</td>
<td>Lower the business tax from 35 percent to a 15 percent.</td>
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<td>Defend and expand the Affordable Care Act</td>
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<td>Bring down out-of-pocket costs like copays and deductibles.</td>
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<td>Reduce the cost of prescription drugs.</td>
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<td>Create a wall across the entire Southern Border.</td>
<td>Completely repeal Obamacare.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have Mexico pay for the wall.</td>
<td>Modify existing law that inhibits the sale of health insurance across state lines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triple the Number of ICE Officers</td>
<td>Block-grant Medicaid to the states.</td>
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<td>Mandatory return all criminal aliens and undocumented aliens.</td>
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### Who Are You Voting For and Why?

**Dan Hurley, 2nd Year Student, President of the Democratic Club, Majoring in Liberal Arts**

"I believe that Hillary Clinton is the most qualified person for the Presidency of the United States. She doesn't use bigotry or threats to others to make a point, and she means what she means. From her experience as First Lady of the United States, to Senator, to Secretary of State she has what it takes, compared to Donald Trump who means whatever a teleprompter makes him say."

**Unanimous Mercer Student, 2nd Year, Majoring in Liberal Arts**

"I believe that Donald Trump should be elected President of the United States. He is an outsider to politics and wouldn't take any nonsense that today's politicians are creating in Washington. Trump will take charge and make this country great. He will make sure to get corruption out and give us back our country. Compared to the Democratic Candidate, Donald Trump has his head over his shoulders to Make America Great Again."

*Information was gathered from hillaryclinton.com, donaldtrump.com, and RealClearPolitics.com.*

"Voting is our right and if something doesn't affect you, you should put the right people into office, making a better future for everyone in this country."
Choosing the Next US President

**LOOKING AT THE NUMBERS**

**DO WHY?**

United States Senator (D-NJ) Cory Booker at the Triumph Bar located in Princeton, NJ on September 18, 2016.

Our right and we take it as a privilege. Voting doesn’t affect you, you might not get affected by the person next to you or if you thought voting isn't necessary, then you should always vote to make sure we get people into office, and focus about making a better future for everyone in this country.

**PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE SCHEDULE**

*SUBJECT TO CHANGE*

- **September 26, 2016**: From 9:00pm - 10:30pm
- **October 9, 2016**: From 9:00pm - 10:30pm
- **October 19, 2016**: From 9:00pm - 10:30pm

Compiled by Pablo Araya-Chacon
Senior Reporter

**HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN NEW JERSEY**

*BY MAIL*

- **Step One**: Print the form online or get your voter registration form through your County Commissioner of Registration or Superintendent of Elections.
  - *Forms for Counties can be found at:* www.state.nj.us/state/elections/voting-information.html
  - *Locations for Counties can be found at:* www.state.nj.us/state/elections/voting-information-local-officials.html

- **Step Two**: Fill out the form once you have it with you.

- **Step Three**: Mail the completed form to your County Commissioner of Registration or Superintendent of Elections no later than **October 18**.

*In Person*

- Follow the same process as by mail but instead of mailing it, submit the form in person by **October 18**.
**The Low Down on The Get Down**

By Kassandra Pinedo  
Junior Reporter

In a year that has been giving people of color their fair share of representation after years of waiting, The Get Down, directed by Baz Luhrmann, opened up a doorway for a very specific kind of diversity.

New York City, as it is being born apart by gentrification, is finally having its history accurately portrayed in mainstream media. Starring an Afro-latino in the main role, with a cast made up of primarily black and nuyorican characters, we get to see New York from a reality.

New York hasn’t always been the capitalistic, commercial city you see today. In the South Bronx of 1977 if buildings weren’t aflame, they were turned to rubble scattered throughout violent, drug-addled streets. Phyllis Jones, a Harlem native who has been living in the South Bronx since she was a young child, lets us know, “The South Bronx was indeed ‘burning.’” Entire neighborhoods were hollow shells, buildings were purposely set on fire by arsonists hired by greedy landlords for insurance money.”

The Get Down isn’t just a musical tv show, it’s a much-needed reminder of the pain and suffering New York was built off of and hopefully a wake-up call to gentrifiers disrespecting natives who have stuck with New York through thick and thin. With authentic footage from late 70s NYC, the show provides viewers with glimpses of the past, combined with the joy of an era that provided cheap rent and the privatization of the self.

Although the show received great praise for being the first of its kind, it also brought criticism amongst South Bronx natives. Many believe that the show will bring in another wave of gentrification to the area due to the romanticization the show brings to the era. With advertisements like Kylie Jenner in Pumas in old blue walls, busy workers, and customers seated by the windows enjoying their treats.

**The Get Down on The Get Down**

By Cailltin Keavett
Junior Reporter

As a previous first-prize winner of “Cupcake Wars” in 2011 and located right in the thriving town of Princeton, it is no wonder as to why House of Cupcakes has been a growing success for the past eight years. Rich in smell, and warm greetings, the store teems with an overall enjoyable feeling. At first, the choice of which dessert to try may be certainly overwhelming as there are over thirty-five flavors of cupcakes amongst other treats such as, donuts and cookies.

Co-founder, Ruth Bzdewka has shared that the recipes for the delicious cupcakes were not just developed overnight. Ruth says, “Many of the recipes were ones my mom made when we were kids. The ‘mum mum’ cupcake is my favorite and named for my mom.” There is much to be said about this budding cupcake shop. A full time employee, Terry Fischer, enjoys working for the establishment because she feels that all of the employees are like a close-knit family and everyone cares about each other. She says that because of this, it doesn’t really feel like work. The owner, Ruth Bzdewka has also enjoyed her time spent here as she says, “We get to meet wonderful people and working in a retail establishment is a rewarding life. I could not ask for anything more.”

As far as the national bestseller cupcake, red velvet takes the prize. A current customer, Megan T., comes here with her parents on occasion weekends just for a sweet treat and enjoys red velvet along with cookies and cream as her favorite cupcake choices. Her parents, Steve and Jackie, may have to disagree as they picked out strawberry shortcake and carrot cake as their favorites. A vanilla-frosted apple pie filled is another cupcake that deserves recognition. It is loaded with creamy vanilla icing, while the inside cake is very moist and fresh. The top of the cupcake is covered with rainbow sprinkles giving it an appetizing look overall. This shop is doing very well for itself just based off of customer input and the employees are more than satisfied with their jobs.

It is clear why this place has become a favorite for locals, as well as travelers from around the country. Those of you looking for a sweet treat should not miss out on this place, because it does not disappoint!
The Six Year Status Quo
An examination into graduation rates

Caroline Strainier

At what point did “the best four years” of a person’s life turn into the best six years? According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2012, the six-year graduation rate was 56% for males and 62% for females. This was a statistic among first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor’s degree or the four-year institution in 2007. Ninety-five percent of them were unable to gain their bachelor’s degree until Spring of 2013. Some factors contributing to this? Which sociological changes have done to cause this problem? How much control as a society do we have over this issue? Is it too late to change?

According to many sociologists, humanity consists of two social components. There is culture, which is the ‘blueprint’ of all societies and that form patterns in our behaviors, thoughts and emotions resulting in the creation of social structures, which is the second component. Social structures are patterns of relationships among social group, organizations, bureaucracies and social institutions, which are the largest social structures. Education is a social institution, meaning it is a way of instilling norms, values and skills and knowledge. So, what factors can be attributed to this social change? Is the significant increase in the amount of time it takes to graduate from college something in which we as people have control over?

Today’s adolescents have been pressured into believing an education is not just a value or expectation, but a necessity in order to obtain a half-way “decent” job. Many young people grow up with the plan to obtain a Bachelor’s degree, but have forgotten the real reason behind attending college. With endless social opportunities and their first taste of freedom, many students prioritize social functions over the library and their GPA.

Over the years, our society has become one in which young people turn into “kidufs” - a term coined on sociology. Michael Kimmel’s book Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men. In the book, Kimmel mentions how adolescent males “see grown-up life as such a loss,” explaining the increase in young men who are content to sit out their 20s in duct-taped beanbag chairs. To add on, according to Robert Schoeni, a research professor at the University of Michigan, an average of $20,000 in student loans, and an entitlement that stops them from taking any old job, has resulted in an increase in the number of 26-year-olds living with their parents, which has nearly doubled since 1970, from 11 to 20 percent.

As far as the economic contributors go, there are not enough scholarships or FAFSA in the world to cover the immense hole that college creates in the majority of students’ pockets. To try and better afford college, people are taking fewer credits at a time. However, according to a report called “Four Year Myth” done by a non-profit group based in Indianapolis, “the reality is that our system of higher education costs too much, takes too long and graduates too few.” Despite appearing like a better, more cost-efficient option, the reality is costing students, and their parents, thousands more dollars to do this, and with the lengthy graduation rate, the status quo, more and more money is being thrown away every year.

According to the same study, the problem is not at community colleges, where only five percent of students are taking their Associate’s degree within the traditional two-year period. Though economic factors have also taken a toll on college aged students, with the recent recession there has also been a decrease in job availability.

We have a monster jobs problem, and young people do not “think for themselves,” said Andrew Sum, an economist and director of the Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. Hope Ken mentions this problem in her article titled “Genus: Recession Takes Big Toll On Young Adults.” Ken mentions the increase of older people in the labor force, and how the employment rate among young adults is the lowest it has been since the end of World War II.

With a lack of available jobs waiting for the recently graduated college students, there is minimal motivation to graduate and enter the workforce. With institutions making a large profit, the transfer process, difficult students, and college aged students, it does not take much to fail behind on credits and other requirements needed to graduate. For example, many colleges, including Mercer County Community College, inform their students that you are required to take 12 credits per semester in order to be enrolled as a full-time student. Though often times the part that is left out, is that it is necessary for a student to be taking 15-16 credits a semester in order to actually graduate on time.

Education in America is a huge institution in itself; and with the industrialization of education comes a rise in private institutions, but society as a whole, a rise in materialism. Due to the economic profit that has occurred as well, going to a private or public institution, colleges are leaving students behind in the way they can profit off of you. If that means making your life harder or “accident-ally” keeping you back from graduating then that is what it means. Just as anything else in society, education is something central to our lives. Without it, the different constituents of it, is susceptible to people changing, and with societal influences, changes, and factors, the way they see society changes is not something they can change. With education playing such a huge role in our current society, it is clear that behavior and actions as human beings can affect it, but there not much we can do to control what occurs. And with graduation rates being a major sociological puzzle, it is not a problem that can be fixed unless the rest of society shifts as well.

A professor once said to me, “Your life prospects depend on large scale social forces.” After studying for a semester at one four year institution, then at Mercer County Community College for a semester, only to move on the next four year university, in the fall, this theory became one which has become a firsthand experience. It is, it is happening every year less of a possibility, and has proven that even strong personal goals and hard work may not stand a chance against the system of educational institutions, but college in America.
Get to Know TCNJ

The College of New Jersey is an exemplar of the best in public higher education and is consistently acknowledged as one of the top comprehensive colleges in the nation.

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U.S. News & World Report Regional Universities (North)

Top 15 public colleges most likely to pay off financially
Money

#6 overall student satisfaction
Princeton Review's Best 381 Colleges 2017

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With an Associate’s Degree, the path to your career just got faster.

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Generous scholarship opportunities are available, with on-the-spot credit evaluations being offered to transfer students every day.

At Holy Family University, 40% of new full-time students began their college experience at another institution. Like them, you’ll find more than 40 programs to choose from, one of the lowest net cost options among private universities in the region, and a truly supportive learning environment. Plus, Holy Family University was ranked by NPR as a top 50 school in the nation for emphasizing upward mobility. 

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The Value of Family

Don’t Miss the Bus and MCCC Shuttle Service linking the West Windsor Campus FROM and TO:

**East Windsor-Hightstown**  
**Quaker Bridge Mall**  
**James Kerney Campus**

Mercury County Community College provides free shuttle service weekdays during the Fall and Spring semesters for students, faculty, and staff who wish to travel between the college’s West Windsor Campus and either of two locations – to and from the college’s Trenton Campus, or to and from Quaker Bridge Mall in Lawrenceville (where NJ Transit buses connect to Lawrenceville, the Ewing 609 route, and Princeton 605 route). These handicapped-accessible MCCC courtesy shuttles operate on a first-come first-served basis.

Schedules and more details at www.mccc.edu/shuttle
**Horoscopes**

**Capricorn**
Dec. 22 - Jan. 19
Are you waiting to hear from that special someone? He or she will unexpectedly reach out to you this month. Drop everything or you will miss your opportunity.

**Aquarius**
Jan. 20 - Feb. 18
Inspiration follows you wherever you go. Although you may think your thoughts and opinions are humdrum, you are actually helping others out!

**Taurus**
Apr. 20 - May 20
You should trust your instincts. If you are willing to make changes, you will have a fantastic opportunity.

**Gemini**
May 21 - Jun. 20
Your creative energy will be maximized. Since Mercury goes direct after retrograde, things will finally feel like they are going smoothly again.

**Cancer**
Jun. 21 - Jul. 22
Your gutfeeling is right. You may feel that the time is right to make big decisions. Just make sure Mercury returns to its normal route before any major announcements.

**Virgo**
Aug. 23 - Sept. 22
You should trust your instincts. If you are willing to make changes, you will have a fantastic opportunity.

**Libra**
Sep. 23 - Oct. 22
You are all about balance. Something might throw it off, but don’t worry! With your ability to coordinate, everything will smooth over.

**Scorpio**
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
Your creative energy will be maximized. Since Mercury goes direct after retrograde, things will finally feel like they are going smoothly again.

**Sagittarius**
Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
Some serious creativity will be sparked by travel, education, and ideas! Pay attention to innovations that could turn into a business idea. One major decision will drastically change your finances!

**Aries**
Mar. 21 - Apr. 19
Exercise both the mind and the body. Your inner strength will be reflected outwardly in confidence. Your time would best be spent leading rather than following.

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