Faculty vote no confidence in president Wang

Staff and faculty present litany of concerns about Wang to Board of Trustees

The president of the Mercer’s Faculty Association, Communication Professor Albyn Haywood, was the first to take the podium during the public comment portion of the College’s Board of Trustees meeting on Thursday, April 18, at the JKC campus, to begin to explain to the Board the reasons for the faculty vote of no confidence that was made on April 11.

“Our president has turned herself into a permanent liability for the college—a liability that will hang like a millstone around the neck of the Board and the college until the day the president resigns or is fired,” Professor Haywood said.

The Faculty Association passed the vote of no confidence in a meeting on Thursday, April 11. Eighty-five faculty members voted, three abstained and the remaining 82 voted no confidence.

As noted in a VOICE online article of April 12, a no-confidence vote has no direct consequence in the day-to-day operations of the college, but it does put pressure on the college’s Board of Trustees to address issues related to the president’s performance and her contract.

Professor Haywood explained before the meeting: “[Our] request is, first of all, they listen to what we have been experiencing and take into careful consideration what [Dr. Wang] has to say, what we have to say. They will then have to very seriously do some investigating, and arrive at a conclusion that will be beneficial to the wellbeing and welfare of the college.”

The April 11 vote by the faculty was only the second such vote in the 50-year history of the college since its founding in 1967. The last Mercer faculty vote of no confidence was against then-president John F. Hanley in 1989. Hanley retired from the College in 1992.

Laureen Meyer, the former executive assistant to Dr. J. Brandon Shaw, Mercer’s Vice President of Academic Affairs—who was hired in the fall of 2018, and whose contract was not renewed for fall of 2019—said in an interview with The VOICE, “If you look at what is happening at Mercer right now, it mimics what is happening on the national stage. The way the colleges are supposed to operate is you have a series of checks and balances, and it’s called shared governance, and the faculty works with the board who works with the president.”

She went on to compare the situation to national politics saying, “What is happening is just like [President] Trump shutting down the Congress. President Wang is shutting down the faculty union, and the Board of Trustees, who are like the Supreme Court, are going to have to take a side.”

When Board Chair Mark Matzen opened the public comment portion of the monthly Board meeting, attended by Dr. Wang in her official function as Board Secretary, 19 members of the Mercer faculty and the college community took the microphone one by one and presented their views regarding the president. Speakers were each given three minutes with the exception of the union presidents, Albyn Haywood and Beth Knight, who got six.

The list of faculty grievances included: High turnover rate in leadership, including Vice Presidents and Academic Deans, leading to a loss of institutional memory and creating confusion regarding policies and procedures.

Another issue was the dismantling of the IT department. And “[Spending] more than $2 million to hire an external company to handle IT functions under the pretense of better service and savings to the college.” The company in question is Ellucian.

During his time at the podium during the Board meeting, Dr. Dylan Wolfe, a Communication professor, asked, “Why has Ellucian’s contract been extended?”

Dr. Ed Carmien, a professor of English followed up on this during his remarks saying, “When you look at their [Ellucian’s] promotional materials, [Dr.Wang] is in them, a lot, and she has made appearances in the past at Ellucian conferences, and has been a speaker at these conferences.”

He continued, “It just gives an unsettling impression that our institutional decisions to spend a lot of our resources on Ellucian products…appear to benefit to some degree, Ellucian. We are not making the claim that there is a conflict of interest, we are just saying, gosh, it looks bad.”

Interviewed in the days after the Board meeting, Dr. Wang responded to the Ellucian issue saying, “I don’t see why, if you are a customer, like if you have your fence repaired, and the contractor said, ‘Did I do a good job, and if I did a good job would you be my reference?’ So, as far as the college is concerned, we did move successfully to the cloud, so I talk about the impact of [Ellucian] on our students’ learning.”

However, the Code of Ethics for Mercer Employees states, “No officer or employee shall undertake any employment or engage in any business, transaction, service, or professional activity, whether compensated or not, which might reasonably be expected to impair his/her objectivity or independence of judgment in the exercise of his/her official duties.”

Dr. Heather Jennings, Professor of Psychology, raised another issue of faculty concern, a limitation of contact between faculty and board members. She said, “The board is supposed to act in the public interest, including students, staff, faculty and administration. How are you even supposed to do this when we have gag order of sorts implemented in OMB109?”
On the afternoon of March 12, a fight broke out between two Mercer students, Carolann Reyes (29) and Samantha M. Scholander (29). The two Digital Film majors, according to campus police reports, got into a fight at 12:25pm on the West Windsor Campus quad. Their identities were confirmed by both their own social media posts and by multiple students who were present and had knowledge of the event.

A month prior to the altercation, on February 14, a video of Reyes, taken by a bystander at a Northeastern Conservatory (NJ) Transit commuter train, went viral after being linked to an article by Larry Higgins of NJ.com. The article was posted on the news site NJ.com.

The video showed that Reyes, who was in the “quiet car” of the train, put her Louis Vuitton purse in its own seat and would not move it to let other passengers sit while on the otherwise full train. The incident escalated, delaying the train until eventually, NJ Transit Police removed Reyes from the train according to a follow up article by Claude Brodesser-Akner, also of NJ Advance Media.

Brodesser-Akner reported, “Reyes says ‘I don’t want anyone sitting next to me’ and ‘Don’t put your hand on my stuff’ when the conductor tapped the bag and indicated that she needed to move it.”

The video was posted, social media erupted with negative, and some racially charged comments spread across multiple social media platforms including NJ.com, Reddit, and YouTube. The majority of comments referred to the incident and Reyes herself as “en-titled,” “infuriating,” and “disrespectful.” However, some commenters took to Reyes’ defence.

One comment by the username “Whoisrae” on Reddit stated, “I hope everyone that saw this think like this, I don’t think I’d care enough to delay the train over it.”

The controversial event quickly gained Mercer students attention.

According to an anonymous student familiar with both Reyes and Scholander—who asked not to be named for fear for her physical safety—Scholander told a group of students in a Mercer class to share the news about Reyes’ viral video. Then, the source says, Scholander herself shared the video to Facebook explaining that the woman in the video attended the same college she did. However, no direct reference to Reyes was made.

After Scholander’s Facebook post, according to the same anonymous source, Reyes confronted Scholander about her spreading of the video. “There was a buildup... They were going back and forth arguing. It’s just a bunch of petty stuff,” the source said.

During a three week period tensions between the two students both online and in person seemed to intensify and a rumor circulated that Scholander posted a video of Reyes on her Youtube channel expressing her unflattering feelings about Reyes. The video was apparently removed, according to several witnesses familiar with the case, however, THE VOICE could not access it to verify its content or its existence.

What was obtainable was a Facebook status update on Scholander’s page posted on February 20th at 9:30PM, six days after the NJ Transit video went viral.

The post reads, “I love the court of social media, the internet will drag the life out of you when you deserve it the most. RR to Jordyn Woods and the girl on the NJ transit train.”

According to classmates, tensions continued to escalate between the two students and it seemed a calculated fight might be in the development. The day of the fight, an anonymous source says, Scholander planned to meet with a Communication professor at noon in his office after her class with Reyes.

“[Carolann and a friend] apparently had followed [Scholander] to [the profes-sor’s] office when she went to go talk to [him], and waited for her to come out,” the anonymous source continued, “When I heard that the fight had started when Sam was walking back across campus and Carolann got behind her and pushed her into the brick wall.”

Video shows Reyes in the quad, near the ramps leading up to LA building on one side and the ET building on the other, hitting Scholander multiple times, grabbing her by the hair, throwing her to the ground and pushing her head first into a low brick retaining wall. Scholander can be seen attempting to fight back.

One hour after the campus security report of the altercation, Reyes took to Face-book herself, using her verified Facebook handle “Carola Reyes,” to proclaim her “victory.” Her status read, “Yooo I just WHOOPED this bitch assasses on school campus!” followed by four laugh face emoticons.

About two hours after the fight—which was recorded on video that THE VOICE has obtained and verified—Reyes made another post to her Facebook page that included a video recording of the fight. Her status read, “LMAO This bitches really tried it. TALK SHIT, GET HIT u ass keyboard warrior.” The video was accompanied by the hashtag “#sharethisshit.”

A bystander told THE VOICE that following the altercation she saw security tend to Scholander with an ice pack while Reyes left to share the news of what occurred with students in the cafeteria. THE VOICE reached out to security to corroborate this information, but they declined to respond.

After the altercation occurred and security filed a report, both women involved were contacted by the disciplin ary committee which sched uled independent meetings with each student to address the situation.

According to the same anonymous source, Scholander has indicated that she was sus- pended and has been given a return date of June 30.

John Simone, Athletic Director and Assistant Dean for Student Development, who chairs the disciplinary commit tee did not give names, but said, “One case is resolved and one [is] still pending appeal.”

After the legal process, an appeal would go to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA). Mercer does not currently have a VPAA.

The anonymous source gave her opinion of the situ ation saying, “Carolann’s not friendly, she doesn’t have many friends. Depending on who’s side someone is on, most peo-ple just don’t like both of them.”

Music Department scholarship fundraiser recital brings in $1,400

By Chelsey Johnstone & Vanessa Woolfolk

Senior Reporters

In order to create a more stu-dent involved community fund-raiser, the music department had the Music Club host the event along with the help of the Student Government Association (SGA).

The scholarship itself is being offered to all MCCC Mu sic majors and requires an essay to be written about individual need for the scholarship, their contributions to the depart-ment itself, their academics and community services, as well as their vision for their future ca- reer plans.

Professor Hornick says, “[SGA] created the parameters for the application...The execu-tive board of the Music Club is collecting all of the essays. We’re removing names from them and numbering them to make them anonymous so they are judged on the merits.”

Initially, the department set modest hopes of rais-ing anywhere between $500- $600 from the event.

“My goal was there was no way we weren’t going to hit $500 if I had to cover it all my-self,” said Professor Hornick. He continued, “but...we had some very generous people and we hit $1,400 dollars.”

Before the event Music Club president Matthew Gar-gullio, said, “The music department, especially in this school, is usually a small branch and its always overshadowed by STEM.”

However, after the suc cessful fundraiser, Gargullio’s perspective had changed. He said, “I think this is a milestone into us being a real voice in the college.”

Gargullio added, “Now, it feels like we’re growing up. It feels like we’re going somewhere, finally.”

By Chelsey Johnstone & Vanessa Woolfolk

Senior Reporters

After years of discussion about holding a faculty music recital to raise money for the college’s first ever official music scholar-ship, the Music Department was able to put the plan into ac-tion.

On Friday night, April 12, the faculty in different musi-cal disciplines, from percussion to violin, presented a range of performances in varying musi-cal styles. The majority of the department’s faculty, staff, and adjunct professors teamed up to perform multiple pieces as the Music Club members sold baked goods outside the door. The idea for the fundraiser came over two years of talking and then finally just going ‘hey wait, we need to stop talking and do it,” says Professor Scott Hornick, Music Club advisor and Head of the Music Department.
The West Windsor number is ext. 3503, and JKC is ext. 3175. In order to dial those numbers from a non campus phone, such as a cell phone, a full campus prefix must be dialed. That number would be 609-570-3503 for West Windsor.

The page explains "Red telephones are located at either end of hallways and vestibules throughout the campus. These telephones provide direct communication with the Security office and should be used for emergency reasons only."

According to Security Chief Michael Flaherty, issues reported through red phones or call boxes that are not presenting a real danger to individuals are like "using 9-1-1 to call for a pizza."

Flaherty says, "A lot of people get offended when we remind them that they are using an emergency line for a non-emergency."

But even using the non-emergency extension has not been successful for some. Another professor, who also asked not to have her name said, "I arrived at my lab room in AD this morning and the door was locked. My swipe card didn’t work, but I had programmed the non-emergency number for security into my phone so I called it. First it rang a dozen times without an answer. I hung up and dialed again and I got a recorded message saying ‘all lines are busy at this time’. So there was nothing left to do but use the red phone."

She continued, "I didn’t want to use it. I understood that it was not an emergency, but I was out of options. I had 30 students waiting and we were ten minutes into class time already."

She says a security guard arrived five minutes later and opened the door, telling her she needed to have her swipe card access updated.

She says she asked, "Could someone please send an email to all faculty to let them know that?" and that the guard told her "That’s outside of my job.”

Flaherty explains there used to be stickers indicating the non-emergency number, that should be used for issues like door opening, listed underneath all the call boxes and red phones.

"The problem is that people keep taking them down. I’m not sure why someone would want to do something so foolish as that,” Flaherty says.

Asked if security had any plans to replace the number stickers, Flaherty says, "That is a great suggestion and I think we should revisit it.”

Investigating whether trash and recycling are being mixed

By Bianca Martinez & Saad Ahmed, Reporters

On campus, there are separate bins for waste and recyclables, however, from looking at the black trash and blue recycle bins, it seems as if a lot of trash is being mixed together.

Ricardo Morales, a student at Mercer who is a Communication major says, “I feel like people are lazy and they don’t wanna really throw things away in the right, or the correct container.”

In many classrooms and along the walkways there is only one type bin, often a blue paper recycling bin, so without alternatives, students and staff seem to be discarding their waste as recyclables together.

In the county, the recycling percentage is 65 percent which just about meets the federal requirement. According to Daniel Napoleon, the Director of Environmental Programs at the Mercer County Improvement Authority, the county is doing pretty well.

Napoleon says, “In terms of education, I think the key for college campuses is to increase your signage…And also wherever there is a trash can, there should be a recycling container.”

Separating items and recycling, in general, has financial benefits.

In a case study conducted by the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network, it found that avoiding the cost of disposal is very cost-effective. "It will vary depending upon the fee charged for garbage disposal at the facility in your area, but in New Jersey with such disposal fees averaging over $80 per ton, the avoided cost of disposal can be significant.”

On a statewide level, authorities are encourage recycling.

As reported by Recycling Today, “New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe announced Jan. 2 that local governments will share $14.3 million in grants to enhance recycling efforts in the state. The funds will be allocated based on 2016 recycling performance in various communities.”

One of these communities includes Hamilton Township, specifically receiving $150,719. It’s not clear what specific efforts Hamilton will undertake.

Valerie Cruz, a housekeeper at Mercer employed by the company ABM, says she keeps both recyclables and trash separated as instructed but is not responsible for taking out the garbage, as that duty is handled to someone else at night.

Cruz says, “In the morning, we check only the bathrooms and some offices. But in the night, they clean the classes, all the floors...But this is in the night.”

Marie Jermain, a chef at Mercer since 2017, says items at the kitchen are also separated in their own way.

She says, “Well, they have two dumpsters, like the regular garbage go in one thing, we have the cardboard go in the other one.” Grease is also separated, according to Jermain.

At Mercer, garbage trucks do come early in the morning on the allocated days to collect the garbage around the campus.

However, it is still unclear whether Mercer combines all trash together at the end of the day. It is clear that the problem of not having trash bins located beside recycle bins is causing people on campus to mix their waste.
The faculty grievance, as presented by Jennings, was specifically that President Wang had created policies to prevent the Board of Trustees “from exercising due oversight. Specifically, the President implemented a Code of Ethics for Board of Trustees members blocking communication with any college employee other than herself.”

Dr. Wang responded in a later interview, saying, “You read for yourself if there is or isn’t a gag order. There isn’t….and by the way, it’s a Board policy. It’s that I didn’t dictate it. It’s the policy of the board. It’s what you call Board bylaws.”

Matzen affirmed Wang’s position, saying in an interview, “It is a board-driven process, the president does not drive the bylaws of the Board of Trustees.”

The clause that Jennings seemed to be referring to is letter F in OMB100, “Trustees should strive to support the college’s stated and never criticize College President, any staff or fellow Trustees in public. If a trustee is contacted by College Staff for any reason, the trustee should listen respectfully. However, the trustee should redirect the staff to the appropriate administrator or report that conversation to the Chair and/or College President.”

Another grievance that was read by faculty was, “[Dr. Wang] failed to retain key leaders such as Vice President of Academic Affairs and Director of Financial Aid. Since her appointment in 2015, MCCC has had three Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs. Such turnover prohibits the achievement of long-term strategic goals and creates institutional confusion.”

As stated in a previous VOICE article, “In 2015, a series of rapid changes in Mercer’s upper administration took place starting with a new President, Dr. Jianping Wang, and a new Vice President, Dr. Chang. There were also new employees in two of the three dean positions. Since then the college has also seen the Director of Human Resources, the Chief Business and Financial Officer and the Registrar all either retire or move on to other jobs. Mercer will be on its sixth Vice President of Academic Affairs in fewer than six years as Dr. Brandon’s contract was abruptly not renewed.”

Meyer, Dr. Shaw’s executive assistant, explained why she believed Dr. Shaw’s contract was not renewed and that it had to do with a hiring decision for an open provost position on the college’s JKC Trenton campus. A search committee was convened and recommended one candidate, and Dr. Shaw agreed with their recommendation, but Dr. Wang selected a different candidate.

Meyer said, “[Dr. Shaw] had twice recommended the same person for the position of dean of JKC. Both times, it is my understanding Dr. Wang would not accept his recommendation, and that she wanted him to recommend someone else.”

Meyer continued, “It is also my understanding that Dr. Shaw, said, ‘as president of the college, I will support you, but you can’t ask me to say that this is my recommendation, because it wasn’t my recommendation.”

During the public comments, Dr. Wolfe raised the same issue asking, “Regarding search committees, why do we have them if the president has the authority to override the search recommendations? We are in essence discrediting the process…”

When asked about Meyer’s comment, Dr. Wang responded, “I really, once again, want to say I don’t want to comment on [or] present things in public. I don’t think it’s accurate. It’s something really unfair because one side can talk and the other side cannot and it creates an appearance as if you have something to hide.”

Meyer said, “This is my opinion. It wasn’t as though Dr. Shaw was saying, ‘No, I’m not gonna do that. I am going to completely disregard your directive,’ but what he was saying was, ‘Let’s be truthful here, this is not my decision but I will support you.’”

Ultimately Meyer resigned her position, citing ethical conflicts.

Dr. Wang stated, “In truth, I want to be professional about it, I really shouldn’t be talking about professional matters in public. I only want to say the facts laid there are not accurate.”

Dr. Shaw was unavailable for comment on these issues as of press deadline.

During Dr. Wang’s tenure, graduation rates have gone up. Mercer is dedicating more scholarship money than ever, having over $600,000 available. The institution has grown from $8 million to $11 million. Board Chair Matzen noted these accomplishments at the April 18 meeting, after the public comment period ended.

Asked about the events of the Board meeting, Dr. Wang said, “I believe we have a very passionate, opinionated faculty, with strong opinions about a lot of things, and I respect their opinions, but as all of you know, I have a very open door policy, and every week I hold one hour open office hour, and many of you have taken advantage of it. I want to invite faculty to come in, as I said before.”

Matzen told The VOICE directly after the meeting, “We have as a board, confidence in the president. She has done some amazing things, moved us in a strong direction, financially and academically, both on the budget side and on the Foundation side. Having said that, anytime you hear of things that are issues, and especially when you hear from this many…it might make you look at different things…It brings some things to the board that we will definitely discuss.”

NOTE: Jim Franklin, Professor Emeritus of English and Journalism, served as guest media adviser for this article. VOICE media adviser, Professor Matthew Koch is and Professor Holly Johnsen, rescued from advising on this article because of their conflict of interest as members of the MCCC faculty union.

PROFILE: Prof. Leinz Valdes makes time for everything from Mercer to CNN

Gabby Uhlak, a second year Exercise Science major who is one of Valdes’s students says, “[he] has a good sense of humor that keeps class light-hearted and makes the fear of speaking publicly easier to manage.” She continues, “He makes sure to incorporate real life into what we are learning in class.”

Valdes graduated with an undergraduate degree in Journalism from Rutgers and first worked for an education firm non-profit to help at-risk students. Though he liked the job, he longed to go back to journalism, so he went back to school and get a Masters degree in Journalism from Columbia University. From there he was able to move on and get a job at CNN.

Valdes says he has his eye on CNN from early on. “It’s great to know what you want to do [in life], and know where you want to work.” Valdes says, explaining that having a specific goal in mind made it easier to identify the steps needed to get there. Valdes started freelancing at local news stations including News12 and NY1 by working as a photojournalist and editor. Tired of the inconsistent workflow, a job opened up in CNN’s media operations. The job focused on quality control and color correcting all of the video content that comes into CNN. It was a tech job that helped Valdes get his foot in the door. Valdes worked in the production and editorial side at CNN before transitioning to digital media in 2012. He says being a digital producer has lead to a wide range of opportunities. For example, after the devastating earthquake that hit Haiti in 2010, he was able to go there and document the recovery efforts. Footage he shot was used on Anderson Cooper 360. Other shows he has worked on at CNN include Lou Dobbs Tonight, Heros, and Erin Burnett OutFront.

Valdes has been teaching on and off at Mercer since 2008. The overlap between being a journalist, Communications Professor, and media producer, is the constant learning of information and “learning the audience,” Valdes says. Aaron Board, a second year Business Administration major who has Valdes for class says “Valdes is a great professor. He goes above and beyond to connect with all of his students in class. He has a modern teaching style.”

Professor Leinz Valdes teaches Public Speaking and Human Communication at Mercer. He has been teaching here on and off since 2008. He also works for CNN in New York.
They released the report, now what?
With Mueller report released, activists say there are many more questions

By Michael Bolden &
Deborah Fernandes
Senior Reporters

On Friday, March 22, special counsel Robert Mueller’s report on possible collusion between President Trump’s administration and Russia to influence the 2016 elections was provided to Attorney General William Barr. Activists nationwide had been pushing for its release and continued to do so after Barr released a four page summary of the report on March 24, drawing his own conclusions about the content.

At that point, according to reporting in the New York Times, people who worked on the investigation had indicated that Barr’s description of the report’s conclusions was misleading and underplayed the seriousness of the findings.

In response, citizens in more than 300 towns and cities held a day of action and rallies, on April 4, demanding that Barr “release the report,” meaning the full report.

The protest was organized by the MoveOn organization. MoveOn is an online organization that says it fights for equality, social justice and political progress.

The same energy and optimism that powered the protest continues to energize others. "Olivia’s Rainbow Gallery," which lives up to both the interests of Olivia Kuenne and the mission of the D&R Greenway which states as its goal to “inspire greater public commitment to safeguarding New Jersey land.”

Even though the display space is limited, the children’s artwork in the “Animal Expo” exhibit, with its lively crayon drawings of animals and their descriptions had a larger than life feel.

Carolyn Edelmann, a poet and naturalist who lives in Princeton, is the curator of “Olivia’s Rainbow Gallery.” She serves as its communication director as well, often writing about the current exhibits on the local news service Patch.com.

In a recent interview, Edelmann said the message is “fostering a love of nature and connection to it based on her experiences spending summers near Acadia National Park in Maine, according to an article by Carolyn Edelmann, the gallery’s curator, in Patch.com. The photos were close-ups of things like white mushrooms growing through deep green moss.

In March the gallery featured art work from the K-3rd grade girls at Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart in a collection called “Animal Expo.” The students created the exhibit as part of a interdisciplinary project to build skills in researching animals, writing about them in detailed descriptions and creating artwork that lives up to both the interests of Olivia Kuenne and the mission of the D&R Greenway.

The protest was organized by the MoveOn organization. MoveOn is an online organization that says it fights for equality, social justice and political progress.

Georgette Chalker, who was at the protest, says now, “My concern still remains and we need to convince people that this is not a Democrat issue or a GOP issue, this is an American issue.”

Oliveira’s Rainbow Gallery exhibits celebrate nature and a child’s life

By Taylor Palancia
& Staff of The College VOICE

On August 31, 1997, a 5-year-old local girl named Olivia Kuenne died in a freak accident when a stone bench fell on her. In a 2011 article in NJ.com, her father Christopher Kuenne described how the “ultimate nightmare for any parent” left him feeling a loss of control.

In a recent article, Deborah Kilmer, manager at the gallery, says, “We love the kids. It’s inspiring. It’s a great way to introduce the kids to nature. It’s really an inspiring thing we do here.”

Edelmann says that she is passionate about the work of the gallery, especially because it helps to carry on Olivia’s legacy. "I think it’s touching. For those who knew [Olivia] and knew how much she loved nature, it’s touching. It’s carrying out a type of legacy for her.”

On April 4, locals rallied at the capital and called on Attorney General William Barr to release the Mueller report. It was released two weeks later.
There was a moment of controversy in the top of the fourth inning when Monroe shortstop Joseph Encarnacion hit a long fly ball down the third base line and over the left field fence. The umpire judged that the ball stayed in fair territory and indicated it was a home run.

Vikings head coach Fred Carella saw it differently. “What I saw was that the ball cleared the fence by plenty, but it was foul. It stayed right on the line and stayed foul the entire time,” Carella said.

The Vikings head coach briefly left the dugout to argue his point with the umpire. “His [the umpire’s] response was that it hooked foul after it had already cleared the pole,” Carella said. “Our catcher and our third baseman both agreed with me and the guys in the dugout did as well. I mean it was close, but from our vantage point it was clearly foul.”

This run brought the score to 2-2.

The Vikings were not deterred by the umpire’s decision. Mercer went on to score five runs in both the bottom of the fourth and fifth innings.

With the regular season coming to an end at the beginning of May, the Vikings will next head to the regional playoffs.

The region tournament starts May 10, so really the key for us is to keep focusing on playing well, doing the little things right, playing as a team, playing all together,” Stec said.

He added, “We’re getting hot before the playoffs and hopefully, that will just kind of roll right into it.”

Esports are booming nationwide and locally

By Marielena Peters

There has been a long debate as to whether competitive gaming can be considered a sport; with the main argument being: there’s no physical aspect to it. But according to The Oxford English Dictionary definition of a sport, it is “an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment.”

Under this definition, video games or Esports are most definitely sports.

Though games like League of Legends and Overwatch are not being broadcast on ESPN like poker, respective game publishers have increased into quality production through video game streaming services that could rival their video production. This investment is proving to be profitable.

Newzoo, the leading provider of market intelligence for the Esports industry, projects that the Esports industry will generate $1.1 billion in 2019.

By Patrick Mulligan

Mercer’s baseball team defeated non-conference opponent Monroe College of New York 12-6 at home on Tuesday, April 16 to bring their overall season record to 24-11. The Vikings were dominant throughout the game, at one point leading by nine runs.

Starting pitcher Dave Stec gave a strong performance on the mound, striking out six batters in five innings and giving up three runs, two of them earned. Sam Ivrin relieved Stec in the top of the sixth inning. He had two hits and drove in two runs.

For the visiting team, shortstop Micah Sproule was 2 for 3 with an RBI and a run scored. Designated hitter Collin Sheehan had two hits and drove in two runs.

The Vikings left fielder Domenic Boselli went 3 for 5 at the plate, scoring 2 runs and batting in 4. Designated hitter Collin Sheehan had two hits and drove in two runs.

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CONGRATS GRADUATING VOICE STAFFERS

SUPERHERO NAME: CAPTAIN COFFEE
JOB AT THE VOICE: MANAGING EDITOR
SUPERPOWER: CONSUMPTION OF COFFEE
WHAT’S NEXT: OFF TO MONTCLAIR
DREAM JOB: FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT
FAVORITE MOMENT WORKING FOR THE VOICE?: FIRST 24 HOUR TURN AROUND
PARTING ADVICE: FIND WHAT YOU LOVE AND NEVER STOP TALKING ABOUT IT.

SUPERHERO NAME: THE STRUCTURE
JOB AT THE VOICE: EDITOR IN CHIEF
SUPERPOWER: TAKING A GIANT JUMBLE OF ARTICLES AND MAKING A PAPER OUT OF THEM
MAJOR: EVERYTHING
WHAT’S NEXT?: SEMESTER OF MUSIC LESSONS THEN MONTCLAIR
PARTING ADVICE: LEARN YOUR TEAM. EVERYONE WORKS DIFFERENTLY.

SUPERHERO NAME: HIDDEN TALENT
JOB AT THE VOICE: REPORTER
SUPERPOWER: IT’S A SECRET
WHAT’S NEXT?: KEEP ON HEADING FOR THAT DEGREE
BEST PART WORKING FOR THE VOICE?: WORKING WITH TALENTED AND HELPFUL PEOPLE
PARTING ADVICE: LIFE IS NOT A RACE. YOUR TIMELINE IS YOUR OWN.

SUPERHERO NAME: VANESSA THE FINESSA
JOB AT THE VOICE: REPORTER
SUPERPOWER: NOT SWEATING, NO MATTER WHAT THE PRESSURE
WHAT’S NEXT?: MORE COLLEGE
BEST PART WORKING FOR THE VOICE?: NETWORKING AT COLLEGE MEDIA CONFERENCE
PARTING ADVICE: IF YOU NEED HELP, ASK!
Spring fashion face off:

Can you figure out which students go to Princeton and which to Mercer (answer key is at the bottom), but more importantly, who is best dressed for spring?

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRISTEN MILLER
Spring fashion face off: Mercer vs. Princeton

Can you figure out which students go to Princeton and which go to Mercer (answer key is at the bottom), but more importantly, who is best dressed for spring?

**ANSWER KEY:**
1. Princeton (Eliana Kozol).
2. Princeton (Zak Benayad).
4. Princeton (Maggie Erwin).
5. Mercer (Ramie Ahmed).
7. Mercer (Quan Tran).
8. Mercer (Nicholas Rivero).
10. Mercer (Alessandro Rivero).
11. Princeton (Denise Kwong).
12. Princeton (Sonia Gu).

As for who is better dressed? In the end, we pretty much look the same.
ON THE RISE with NJIT

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Office of University Admissions njit.edu
Let them eat cereal, all day long!

REVIEW: Spoony Sweets in Hamilton is serving up nothing but breakfast

By Nina Pemberton  
Reporter

One of the latest foodie trends has come to the suburbs. Spoony Sweets, which opened April 13, 2019, is a cereal cafe in Hamilton. Yes, cereal.

When one first enters the "restaurant," a clean and modern store located near Halo Pub off of Rt 33, you’re hit with the sweet smell of sugary cereal. There’s a makeshift living room in the corner, with couches and a TV playing Saturday morning cartoons evoking that nostalgic breakfast feeling. You’re greeted by the smiling faces of the owners, Ryane Knipe and Medina Cekic, who are eager to welcome you and offer suggestions.

Although it may seem like there’s only so many cereal options, the Spoony Sweets menu boasts over 40,000 cereal combinations; 31 cereals, 18 toppings, 4 drizzles and 5 milks are available to the customer to combine in their own creation. A regular bowl sells for $5.49 while a large is $6.99.

However, if you’re overwhelmed or want a combination from the cereal experts, there’s signature combinations created by Knipe and Cekic themselves. For example, the Snickerdoodle (Cookie Crisp®, Rice Krispies Treats®, Brown sugar, Caramel Drizzle) and the Better than Fruitcake (Honey Bunches of Oats®, Cheerios®, Almonds, Raspberry Drizzle).

I ordered the Campfire (French Toast Crunch®, Oreo O’s®, Marshmallows, Vanilla Drizzle) with 2% milk. Personally, it was a little too sweet for me, but with their extensive options, I’m positive there are 100s of combinations that I would enjoy more.

Alongside the cereals, the menu also includes the Spoony Banana "Sushi" Roll—bananas and various toppings wrapped in a whole wheat tortilla. The Sweets Roll, for example, includes banana, Nutella, cinnamon frosted flakes, and raspberry drizzle. Additionally, there are various "cereal milks" available as beverages.

"It started 14 years ago," says Knipe, as he explains how Spoony Sweets came to be. Though the timing and finances were wrong, about a year ago the couple finally decided to finally start the business. "We’re kind of done working for other people. Let’s go build a dream. And a year later here we are."

Knipe, who lives in Cumberland County, and Cekic, who lives in Brooklyn, are "basically, but not officially" married. The two decided to start their business directly in the middle of their two homes, in Hamilton. Customer service is one of the most important things to the owners. "We want to change the way people see restaurants," said Knipe. "It’s laid back. You want to watch something on TV? I got you. If you want to hear different music I got you. It’s all good." Cekic chimed saying, "[this] is our island. And we want everyone to come visit our island and enjoy themselves while they’re here, honestly." It’s worth it.

REVIEW: The Gingered Peach bakery is mouth-wateringly good

By Marielena Peters  
Reporter

The smell of sweet confections fills your nose as you enter the door of the old barn style building with its homestyle furnishings. People line up against the counter while employees ring up products at a quick pace. The line soon wraps around to the room demonstrating just how popular The Gingered Peach, a Lawrenceville bakery and coffee house, has become.

The Gingered Peach owners say they pride themselves on home-style baking. Everything is made from scratch with fresh ingredients. The baked good selection includes cupcakes ($2), cookies ($1.85), scones ($2.65), cinnamon buns ($2.95).

America’s favorite cookie to dip in milk is a star in the bakery’s Oreo fla-

vored cupcakes. Fans of the cookie will love the surprise on the first bite as the cookie is baked into the center. If you’re not a huge chocolate or Oreo fan, this cupcake may feel a bit too heavy and overpowering.

Instead, the cinnamon buns are equal part gooey and flaky. The sweet glazing on the baked pastry makes for a delicious sweet treat.

During a recent visit, Lynn Johnson, a customer since their days as Let Them Eat Cake, sat in the dining area enjoying a peanut butter cookie with a cafe au lait. She said, “the peanut butter cookies are perfect. They’re not too sweet so I can enjoy eating more than one.”

If you’re looking for something to satisfy your sweet tooth, visit The Gingered Peach is a top bet. It’s located at 2 Gordon Avenue in Lawrenceville.
Bullying, and how to stop it

Laurie Gallagher

Bullying is so common that even President Trump is bullying people with his Tweets and in his speeches. He has mocked almost everyone, including people with disabilities. As a person growing up with Down Syndrome, I have suffered severe bullying, especially in school, where bullying usually starts. There were so bad at one point my mom had to put me in a different school.

So what can we learn about bullying and how to stop it before the bully grows up and maybe even becomes president?

The Centers for Disease Control and the US Department of Education came up with a definition of bullying in 2014. The basic definition includes unwanted aggressive behavior, power imbalance, and repetition of behaviors that may be physical, like stealing someone's things or hitting them, (direct) or things like spreading mean rumors (indirect).

According to Medcinet.com, the signs that may indicate a child is being bullied include: missing belongings, unexplained injuries and a limited number of friends. Symptoms experienced by victims of bullying may be physical, emotional and behavioral like headaches, stomachaches, changes in appetite, bed wetting, dizzy- ness and general aches and pains. Psychological symptoms often include irritability, anxiety, sadness, trouble sleeping, tiredness in the mornings, loneliness, helplessness and feeling isolated.

But we can help stop bullying. A large scale study of different anti-bullying programs was published in the journal School Psychology Review. What they found out is that the best anti-bullying programs are ones that teach bystanders to intervene, especially if schools start teaching these skills early. A lot of times bullies do their behavior out in the open, but bystanders can feel pressured not to do anything for fear of getting bullied themselves. Notifying teachers, and encouraging the victim to ask for help is a good start. It also helps if a group of people who have witnessed the bully in action all tell them to stop. Bullies don’t act out as much when a whole group objects to their behavior.

Some studies of adults who handle bullies show that when a bully is yelling at someone in public, you can sit next to the person being bullied and talk to them about anything at all so the two of you can ignore the bully’s behavior and take the wind out of his sails. When people know they are not alone, that they are supported, they will feel better, and when a bully doesn’t get the reaction he wants, he may give up.

According to Medcinet.com, bullies lack empathy or the ability to understand other people’s feelings, and often feel weak themselves and want to control others. The people around the bullies can start becoming bullies themselves by peer pressure. So maybe the people around President Trump need to read this and need to stand up together and say making fun of people isn’t right.

Written with support from the staff of The College VOICE

Having a campus nurse would improve student success

By Marielena Peters & Staff of The College VOICE

Institutions of education in the United States usually have a wide array of resources to benefit their students. One of these resources is a Health Center or at least an active nurse on staff, which you would think Mercer might have, since we have a well known nursing program. But as we’ve reported in The VOICE several times, we don’t and that has a negative impact on student learning.

Students with minor medical problems—like migraines, a bad nosebleed or a sprained ankle—end up having to leave classes to deal with the issues, instead of getting quick treatment and heading back to class.

Starting from kindergarten, students in public schools in the U.S. have some type of medical staff on their school’s campus. The government understands that having a certified professional on hand can assist with small issues and know when something is an emergency and an ambulance should be called. If students then can keep the focus on studying.

Of New Jersey’s 18 community colleges, seven have health centers of some sort, Mercer is among those that do not.

Skye Waters, a Digital Film major, has experienced firsthand the shortcomings of not having a nurse on campus. After falling ill on campus, her only options were to either go home or call 911 to be transported to a hospital for treatment.

Neighboring community colleges such as Middlesex County College describe on their website the available medical services such as “nursing assessment of health problems and referrals as needed. First aid/treatment that may help reduce serious complications. Immunization offered at ‘cost’ for current students.”

From MCCC’s own website, student health services are described as “limited.” For medical emergencies, certified security personnel can administer first aid, but they are generally instructed to call an ambulance.

A VOICE article published November of 2017 noted that: “Mercer’s Health Professions Coordinator, Cynthia Ma- nyas has been working at Mercer for 18 years and says she would love to have a nurse’s office on campus, but that she is aware that funding presents a problem.”

However, back in 2008, another VOICE article tackled the issue and noted a way that funding might be made available. According to reporter Alexa- ndra Hough, “Although room in the budget and the high cost of the center seems to be the most significant reason why we do not have [a health center], there are sources that might help Mercer finance one. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation specifically offers grants to institutions and organizations that provide health care to what they call ‘vulnerable populations’, which include low income populations that are served by community colleges like Mercer. In particular, they tend to give money within the state of New Jersey. Further, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation goes beyond many other non-profit organizations in that it offers continuing support rather than simply seed money for start-up costs. This type of financing would be crucial for such an endeavor.”

And guess what? This Robert Wood Johnson grant program is still around. There are creative solutions out there, but there doesn’t seem to be anyone in administration able push to get this needed resource.

The anxiety of not having proper care weighs on the minds of many students, and health problems often cause students to miss school which can cause students to miss classes, and inability to graduate. Having a health center on campus could allow students to focus on classes so they could get the education they are striving for.

MAIL CALL
What do you think? Do you agree with the opinions you see here? Do you like our coverage of College and local issues? Is there a topic you really want us to cover? DROP US A LINE AND LET US KNOW!

MCCC LIBRARY
Read documents and extra materials to go with all the articles you see here.

The VOICE is online at mcccvoice.org

MCVC LIBRARY
now open SATURDAYS
10am-4pm!
Honey, flowers, movies and romance: all these things could relate to bees, well maybe not so much for romance, that is until Pornhub came along.

Pornhub, a Canadian pornographic video sharing site owned by MindGeek, recently launched a new category called BeeSexual to help spread awareness of the diminishing bee population and its effect on nature while also donating to bee-saving charities.

At first, you might think this is a kink-filled category fuelled by melissophilia, sexual attraction to bees (yup, that’s a thing). But bees drastically declining in numbers is an ongoing epidemic and Pornhub merely brings some levity to this situation.

According to sos-bees.org honeybee colonies have been declining since the 1990s. The reasons: bee-killing pesticides, loss of biodiversity due to monoculture (the cultivation of a single crop over a large area), parasites and climate change.

However, it is not only the bees that are on the decline. Pollinators as a whole have been dwindling in size. According to xerces.org, which describes itself as a “science-based nonprofit organization that protects wildlife through the conservation” western monarch butterflies have declined by 99.4 percent since the 1980s.

Pollinators play a vital role in agriculture by fertilizing flowers and crops. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, bees alone fertilize more than 80 percent of our major food crops.

A world without pollinators means a world without humans as well. A study on pollinators by United States Forest Services says that “without pollinators, the human race and all of Earth’s terrestrial ecosystems would not survive.”

Zeke Wagner a plant science major from Mercer says “I believe that as some of the most compassionate and sentient beings on this planet it is morally unsound for us, as a population, not to take the necessary measures to support, maintain and save the bee population.”

So if people want to keep bees Stayin’ Alive like the Bee Gees then we have to start taking better care of the environment. Ways people can help right away includes stopping the use of harmful pesticides which are toxic to bees since they can be absorbed by flowers according to panna.org. The other thing you can do is spread awareness.

Abella Danger a porn star says on Pornhub’s BeeSexual premier video “So remember, without bees, there is no plan B. Take the matter into your own hands.”

Time to step up and be more like the wise folks at Pornhub. No, seriously. The bees need us.
In late March, Mercer faculty reached out by email to a number of upper level Mercer employees who served under the college’s current president Dr. Jianping Wang and are no longer working at the college. The goal was to gain a clearer understanding of the relationship Dr. Wang has with her administrative team, particularly in light of the potential for a faculty vote of no confidence in her leadership which has since occurred. (NOTE: All contact and responses were made prior to the removal of the most recent Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. J. Brandon Shaw).

The contact email explained that “It is not a good idea to form opinions about people without speaking directly to those that know them,” and that the goal was to “gather opinions of our president directly from former MCCC leaders.”

Participants were invited to take an online survey, which some did. Others opted to be interviewed directly by phone.

These were the questions given:

1. Please give your opinion of MCCC’s current president? (likes/dislikes/concerns)
2. Do you have specific examples that illustrate your opinion of MCCC’s president?
3. Several administrators have left MCCC in recent years. Would you attribute their leaving in any way to MCCC’s president? If so, would you please elaborate?
4. Please provide any other comments/thoughts you have regarding MCCC’s president.

The respondents understood that their names and former titles would be kept confidential, so they could feel free to speak candidly.

The respondents’ comments fell into three basic categories. Their responses are paraphrased below. Key terms that respondents emphasized are included throughout.

Leadership
- Good leaders are transparent, collaborative, supportive, and set good examples. She is none of these.
- She did not demonstrate that she cared about input from anyone (internal or external to the College) on anything.
- She is a visionary leader who cares about diversity of ideas. However, she wants to surround herself with an echo-chamber.
- She micro-manages, is not receptive to input or criticism and will institute an agenda meant for you to fail if you disagree with her.
- She does not make the administrators who work for her feel valued.

Personality
- She is narcissistic (Defined by Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary as: “extremely self-centered with an exaggerated sense of self-importance - marked by or characteristic of excessive admiration of or infatuation with oneself” Definition added for clarification.)
- In several instances she directly misrepresented the truth.

Teamwork
- I felt part of an abusive professional relationship.
- She enjoys very little respect among the NJ community college community.
- Several current MCCC administrators will likely leave soon.
- Given her actions, one wonders whether the board is actually paying attention.
When the hurricane came, their voices were gone

Mariela Peters

The island of Puerto Rico has experienced many tropical storms and hurricanes. In the time of my immediate family has been living there, they had experienced short power outages lasting for maybe a night or two as a result of the weather. But when we got news that the Level 4 Hurricane Maria was heading for the island we knew this was a totally different kind of storm.

My mother and I call my dad, brother, and grand- mother in Puerto Rico on an almost daily basis. The conversa- tion topics usually aren’t any- thing too important: “What’d you have for dinner?” “What are you doing today?” “Your cousins mandan saludos and ask when you’re coming down to visit.”

In the days leading up to Maria, we still had our regu- lar conversations but now in- cluding questions like “Do you have enough food and water?” The phone call on the night before the storm hit ended with my dad telling my mother not to worry. That was the first time he ever ended a call that way.

When we put the phone down, we didn’t realize that that would be the last time we would hear my voice, or my brother or grandmother’s, for a month.

On the morning of Sep- tember 20, 2017, the island of Puerto Rico was ravaged. Three million people lost water and electricity. Communication was severed.

News from the island was sparse. We relied on news and include your name and status at Mercer (major and year, faculty or staff position or alumnus). All materials submitted become the property of The College VOICE, which reserves the right to reject or edit material based on length, taste or clarity.

Write to The College VOICE!

Do you have something to say? The College VOICE accepts letters to the editor. Submissions should be no more than 300 words; longer submissions may be shortened. Submit materials in electronic format, trans- parentness laws allow regular people to read and access information about public agencies. NF’s law is called OPRA.

Vikings had fantastic hygiene. Archaeologists have found tweezers, razors, combs, and even ear cleaners at excavations sites.

The list of names of all the people who work on a newspaper is called the ‘masthead.’ The VOICE masthead is on this page.

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CORRECTIONS
NOTE: The April 2 article "New photo exhibit from Tavera Turns at gallery in Trenton asks who feminism belongs to" was written by Tony Richardson, not Blanca Martinez as indicated.

FAST J LAW FACT
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Dear Voice,

Mother's Day is coming up and I don't know what to get her. Any gift ideas?

- Not Gifted

Dear Not Gifted,

You can't go wrong with lingerie and chocolates. No wait. That's Valentine's Day chocolates. No, wait. There's two weeks left until my biology final.

Dear Failing,

How can I convince my professors to let me pass with three weeks left to go in the semester?

- The VOICE

Dear Voice,

How can I convince my professors to let me pass with three weeks left to go in the semester?

- The VOICE

Dear Feline Great,

Mr. FluffyPants shouldn't be on campus, so bringing my cat. I hear there are already 60 feral cats on campus, so bringing Mr. FluffyPants shouldn't be a problem, right?

- Feline Great to Grad

Dear GPA 1.0,

What should I do?

- GPA 1.0

Dear Voice,

How can I convince my professors to let me pass with three weeks left to go in the semester?

- The VOICE

Dear Failing,

Tell them you're dying of a rare disease and you don't want to let your family down. Not saying it'll work, but you know, it's worth a try. Maybe check in with GPA 1.0 who asked an earlier question. You guys have a lot in common.

- The VOICE

NOTE: THIS FEATURE IS FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ACTUAL PROBLEMS IS PURELY COINCIDENTIAL.

Taurus

Apr. 20 - May 20

When loyalty is on the line, you always come through. You can be a fierce ally and you can expect the same from the people around you this month.

Virgo

Aug. 23 - Sept. 22

The birds are singing, the flowers are blooming and you are trying to keep from losing your cool with stress that is overwhelming. Now is the time to get out in nature. It will soothe you.

Libra

Sept. 23 - Oct. 22

A surprise opportunity comes around the middle of the month. You are on the fence but this is the time to take the plunge. The chance won't come along again.

Scorpio

Oct. 23 - Nov. 21

You could sense a big change was coming, but sometimes people ask for the impossible. The key will be knowing when to get out in nature. It will soothe you.

Sagittarius

Nov. 22 - Dec. 21

Someone unexpected asks for a favor and you are feeling tender and needing love. When someone offers a warm shoulder don't be afraid to let your guard down.