Students planning to vote in 2020

Health care and college debt are key issues

By Patrick Mulligan
Senior Reporter

The United States Presidential election is officially less than a year away. Voters will head to the polls on Tuesday, November 3, 2020 to determine who will be in office through January 2025.

There are many important issues being discussed, such as climate change, gun control, health care, and the rising cost of higher education. A recent VOICE survey of 30 Mercer students found that 63% are registered to vote and of those, 84% are planning to get to the polls.

The issues of greatest concern to students were health care reform, the cost of college, and climate change. Next year’s election will be a referendum of sorts on Trump’s first term in office. 73% of students surveyed said they were unsatisfied with the President’s performance so far.

The survey also indicated that Bernie Sanders is the front-runner among declared candidates vying for the Democratic nomination. 36% of respondents said they are likely to vote for the Vermont Senator next year.

In terms of current favorite candidates, 20% of respondents indicated they were planning on voting for Elizabeth Warren, followed by 18% for Joe Biden.

By Tori Pender and Donny Neuls
Senior Reporters

Campus life was disrupted when a preacher, and two followers, began shouting on the quad while holding signs containing words of hate against numerous groups including Muslims and gays, on December 5.

Aden Rusfeldt, also known as Pastor Aden, is the leader of the Key of David Christian Center in Philadelphia. According to the church’s website, it is a “non-denomination Christian Church.”

Rusfeldt arrived on campus around 12:45. Two younger boys accompanied him, one filming on a camcorder and one holding a large sign reading “STOP SINGING JESUS OR HELLFIRE” on one side and the other it said, “WARNING HOMOS - WHORES PORNOK FREEKS: M----- BATORS

 Angry preacher disrupts campus, tells students they’re going to hell
The fire that took place in the second floor women’s bathroom of the Liberal Arts building on Thursday, November 14 is being investigated as an act of arson.

According to Public Relations Officer Lt. Mark Lee at the West Windsor Police Department, the fire was started by someone lighting a toilet paper dispenser on fire.

He went on to say that even though the fire was small, the burning plastic casing caused large amounts of black, heavy smoke.

Some students say they are concerned that the culprit has not been found. Second year Civil Engineering student Elliot Hamerstone said “There’s a lot of issues with pure order, and even fear of showing up here. People might not want to show up.”

However, Lt. Lee says that the Police Department is not worried about a serial arsonist because of the amount of time that has passed since the fire.

According to college president Dr. Jianping Wang, the fire was discovered when Security Commander Michael Flaherty was walking through the Liberal Arts building and noticed smoke coming out of the vent in the door of the women’s bathroom.

Commander Flaherty immediately notified emergency services, and the building was evacuated.

An employee, who asked to remain anonymous for job safety reasons, said a security officer showed them cell phone pictures of the burned out wall of the bathroom and the toilet paper dispenser, and said that Security Commander Michael Flaherty had found a note at the scene.

When asked about the note, College President Dr. Jianping Wang stated “I have never seen one, our security didn’t take a picture and show me the note. I don’t know where that came from. Some people just have too much time on their hands.”

Students and faculty did not receive a notification message about the issue through the college’s emergency alert system until five hours after the fire occurred.

When asked about the process of issuing an MAAlert Dr. Wang said there are several steps and that it had to go through the PR office, but said of the timing of the alert on November 14, “It had nothing to do with the process. It has everything to do with the [phone] line was down.”

She explained there had been ongoing problems with the campus phone and wifi services throughout the week, and they are necessary for activating the alert system.

As previously reported, when asked for comment about how emergency notification is handled in the case of a technology problem, Dr. Jianping Wang, said, “We are actually right now, examining what we do in the event of an emergency… What do we do if the internet is down?”

The college has also not put out any public statement that mentions a fire, causing many students to feel uneasy about the college’s response.

As first year engineering student Tre Cook put it, “I don’t feel too good about that because class is canceled, and shut down. But now I know that it was a fire. It wasn’t through Mercer though. I still want to know what that fire was about, because I’ve heard so many different things, so I’m like what is the true story? They should be in touch with that.”

If you have any information that could assist the West Windsor Police Department in their investigation, please contact their tip line at 609-799-0452.

This fire in the second floor women’s bathroom brought campus safety issues back into the spotlight. As previously reported, the college has not been proactive in addressing and preventing such issues with pure order, and even fear of showing up here. People might not want to show up.”

However, Lt. Lee says that the Police Department is not worried about a serial arsonist because of the amount of time that has passed since the fire.

According to Security Commander Michael Flaherty, this was caused by construction workers installing new alarms without the monitoring company being contacted to tell them that work was being done.

He explained the reason that the alarms in the MS building went off is that the alarms for the SC and MS buildings are connected to each other.

The West Windsor Fire Department responded, and left shortly after.

Second year Communication major Albanie Brown, who was in the cafeteria when the alarms went off said about her state of mind, “I was panicking because I thought something really bad was going on.”

When asked why no MAAlert went out, PR director Jim Gardner said that because it was determined that students and faculty were not in danger, there was no reason to dispatch an MAAlert.
Response to hate: comebacks and YMCA

Continued from page 1

MONEY LOVERS - WITCHES LEARS - MUSLIMS
DRUNKS - SISSIES
THE POPE - ANKLE BITERS GANGSTERS - THIEVERS OBEY JESUS OR HELLFIRE!

As Mercer is a public campus, security and the police were not in a position to force Rusfeldt and his supporters off the property based on current college policy. Rusfeldt packed up and left around 3:00 p.m.

By Ayesha Sultan

Ahmed Elmasry, an honors student at Mercer majoring in liberal arts, grew up in Egypt which is a predominantly Muslim country. From his childhood, he says he was a faithful and devout Muslim. He had many friends and never had any issues publicly expressing his faith. Then he moved to the US and he was 18.

Ahmed says that his identity as a Muslim seemed to create boundaries for him in making friends in college. He says, “I was a strict Muslim as a kid, not because of my parents, I wanted to be. But then I lost faith.”

He says a big part of his fall out from Islam was due to an emotional tragedy. “I was about 16 or 17. I had to watch my grandmother die slowly after a stroke which left her disabled. I had to bury her with my own hands. Then I lost faith. When I lost faith, I started having an identity crisis.”

Crisis of faith are not unusual for adolescents and can be particularly common for Muslims.

In an article from NPR written by Leila Fadel in 2018, she explores the struggles of young Muslims and the reason why they might lose their faith. When I lost faith, I started having an identity crisis. “I don’t use to give a damn but I realized I do want to care about the people I’m attached with.”

Others have taken a different path.

Amira Mubarak, a freshman at Mercer majoring in biology explains her experience saying, “People said to me, you’re beautiful, you’re young, you don’t have to [wear the hijab]. The only problem I have is in prayers in college that people will be watching me and judging me and I feel insecure.”

Non-Muslim students at Mercer have varied reactions toward Islam and Muslims at college.

Brian Amagh, a Mercer Honors student majoring in psychology says, “Isn’t American culture founded on the basis of religious freedom? The right to dress religiously is integrated into our culture. Muslim people feel judged at the school. In an ideal world, no one views them different but that’s not the reality.”

Those who have expertise in cultural studies, such as Mercer sociology professor Dr. Edward Avery-Natale have specific advice to offer. Dr. Avery-Natale advises Muslim students who are intimidated to show their identity out of fear of being judged that “Being vocal is the right choice. There’s evidence to suggest that knowing a large group of people from any race or religion” diminishes stereotypes.

And one police officer from the West Windsor Police Department arrived around 1:04 p.m. More WWPD officers arrived later.

At one point while campus security was talking to the police, a student approached Rusfeldt and stole one of his anti-abortion signs.

Rusfeldt grabbed the student in order to get the sign back. The student escaped his grasp then proceeded to tear apart the sign with his hands and teeth.

At that point Rusfeldt noticed an officer approaching and threatened to press charges on the student. However, he did not appear to be following through, and no one was physically hurt during the event.

While many students engaged in the beginning, towards the end of commotion, LGBTQ+ students waved rainbow flags. Lots of students danced to tunes like “YMCA” and “The Monster Mash” that were being played at top volume from the police vehicle.

Sharmulla Sen, an English Professor, stated “I was outraged and horrified by the vitriol they were espousing against everyone who was not Christian, the LGBTQ community, and women. However, I admire our students and the police who neried their hatred by playing music and dancing to it.”

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Rutgers hosts vigil for Trans Remembrance

By Ross Potter

In remembrance of the 26 transgender lives lost in the US due to hate crimes in the past year, the student organizations LLEGO and Transmissions at Rutgers University in New Brunswickdon’t presently exist and will be the majority of the draft Plan for Dam Site 21 moved forward. The project aims to develop the final draft for Dam Site 21 by the end of the year to allow Mercer County to develop the final draft for the project.

The two organizations hold events and offer services for transgender people at Rutgers University, including the Trans Day of Remembrance vigil. Other events include dances and open mics. During the event, Morgan Huntlen, a graduate student at Rutgers University, then delivered a speech in which they said, "In 2019, we still exist in a time where tomorrow is not promised." They went on to describe both the fear of living as a transgender person in this world and the freedom that comes with living what they define as an "authentic life."

The most powerful thing a trans person can do is live as themselves. "The most powerful thing a trans person can do is live as themselves." Morgan concluded, "The most powerful thing a trans person can do is live as themselves." After the presentation ended, the crowd was led back to Rutgers’s Center for Social Justice Education & LGBT Communities (SJE) for the vigil, where members of the community paid their respects with a moment of silence and then by leaving sticky note messages of love and support that they placed at a small display with pictures of the 26 trans victims of hate crimes. As the LGBTQIA+ community was honored, food, conversation, and trans supportive coloring books were provided. According to Matthew Fontana, Office Manager of SJE, "It’s really nice being able to remember those we’ve lost and also be here with the living. I think."

Locals continue pushback as plans for development of Dam Site 21 move forward

By Donny Neuls

The Mercer County Park Commissions’ draft of their master plan for Dam Site 21 faced public disapproval at its reveal at the Conference Center at Mercer County Community College on Tues. November 13, 2019. The project aims to develop a 280 acre property of wetlands and woodlands that lies across several townships and is less than a mile from the MCCC West Windsor campus. The plan includes development of facilities for "water-based programming" and "other activities" that the Park Commisions say don’t presently exist at any of their other locations.

The master plan was drafted by planning and designing firm, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture. According to their website, they are "committed to creating an ecologically enduring society." Peter Simone, the Project Principal for Simone Collins Landscape Architecture, presented the majority of the draft with assistance from Project Manager Sarah Leeper.

After the presentation, attendees were allotted a time limit of three minutes to speak freely and ask questions to Simone about the draft. However, many spoke for much longer, some nearing as much as ten minutes.

Ten Mercer County residents viewed a diagram of the current state of Dam Site 21 and Parks Commission plans presented at an open meeting on Tuesday, November 13. Park Commissions is headed by Executive Director Aaron Watson who remained silent throughout the heated public comments portion of the meeting.

Residents of Mercer County expressed a strong opposition to the renovation of Dam Site 21.

After the Trans Remembrance vigil at Rutgers, New Brunswick on November 21, participants stayed to enjoy camaraderie and activities.

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In remembrance of the 26 transgender lives lost in the US due to hate crimes in the past year, the student organizations LLEGO and Transmissions at Rutgers University in New Brunswick don’t presently exist to hold a vigil for Trans Day of Remembrance on November 21. The event began at eight o’clock in the evening on the Brower Commons Steps at Rutgers’s New Brunswick campus and was led by Shaan Williams, who is the treasurer for both LLEGO and Transmissions.

Approximately 40-50 people attended. In addition to honoring the lives of the 26 transgender individuals killed, the event also aimed to raise awareness about other issues the transgender community faces beyond outright violence, such as discrimination in the workplace, harassment and lack of legal protections which all make members of the trans community more vulnerable in general and to anxiety and depression in particular.

According to Williams, "About 22-43% of trans people have attempted suicide at some point in their lives." Hyacinth Rivera, Social Media Coordinator of LLEGO, said, "LLEGO’s mission is to empower queer people of color." Landon Stimson, the Social Media Chair for Transmissions stated, "Our goal is really to provide a safe and inclusive space for trans and non-binary students on campus."

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Kirby, faster than a speeding snail
Tortoise in the MS building likes to get around

By Tori Pender
Senior Reporter

Ten-year-old Kirby the Red Footed tortoise is a fixture in the MS building, following favorite students around and looking for snacks of fruit or a trip out for a stroll on the grass.

"He has his favorite people. He’ll go in the professor’s room and just chase them." - Biology Professor Patrick Natale III

His name is Kirby, and he is a Chelonoidis Carbonara or a Red Footed tortoise. He was most likely named after Kirby from the Kirby video game series, though the kid who went away to another college gave him up never explained why he named him that.

Mercer has been Kirby’s home since 2015. “Someone didn’t want him anymore, didn’t want the responsibility to take care of him,” according to Professor of Biology Patrick Natale III.

Kirby resides in the MS Building rooms 218 and 228, the prep room and Biology Professor Patrick Natale III’s office.

Kirby is around 10 years old. The Red Footed tortoises can live to 50 years old according to reptilesmagazine.com.

In a quick poll of 30 Mercer students, only one knew about Kirby’s existence. However, “Students respond well about having life in a biology lab,” Natale says.

Haley Schweitzer, a Liberal Arts Major first met Kirby when she had her Biology 101 lab. Schweitzer describes Kirby as “friendly and adorable.” By all accounts, he is also mischievous, inquisitive and friendly.

“He has his favorite people. He will go in the professor’s room and just chase them,” says Professor Natale. Kirby’s chase speed is at 0.06 mph, meaning it would take Kirby a little over an hour to complete a 100 meter dash. But he’d get there twice as fast a snail with a 0.02 mph average.

A typical day for Kirby begins around 8:30am.m. when Natale lets Kirby out of his office. Kirby starts on his homework as she gets up and prepares to begin her day at 5:45 a.m. when she starts on her homework as she gets up and prepares to begin her day at 5:45 a.m. When the weather gets warmer, pay attention outside because Natale’s work-study students tend to take him on walks because he enjoys the grass.

Kirby also enjoys the greenhouse but “you gotta keep an eye on him” in case he wanders or eats something he is not supposed to, says Natale.

Night students have different experience at MCCC

By Tori Pender
Senior Reporter

Jessica Meisberger, a third-year Nursing major at Mercer, begins her day at 5:45 a.m. when she gets up and prepares to take her daughter to school. On days when her daughter doesn’t have dance practice, Mesiberger takes night classes and does not return home from work and class until 10 p.m. at which point she starts her homework assignments.

Mesibergers’s story is typical for a non-traditional student attending the West Windsor campus. She recalls missing some of her daughter’s dance competitions and “Missing school events... due to class during the week” in order to complete the hours needed for the mandatory clinic for nursing students.

More than 60 percent of nontraditional students report being working students according to Strayer University’s U.S. News Partner Insight. This leaves night classes as the only option. About 2,898 students are taking night classes this semester according to Nina May, Director of Institutional Research at Mercer.

Besides the traditional problems college students face like deadlines, stress and financial struggles, night students face additional problems with the cafeteria and bookstore. All of these resources close early, being inaccessible for night students.

Meisberger addresses one concern which night students have more than 9-5 students: security. Meisberger states that “security should try to be around more visibly when classes are let out. If you are feeling unsafe on campus at night, Dr. Carlen Smith, an adjunct Professor of Biology that teaches at night, recommends walking and parking in well lit areas.

Commander Flaherty adds that “At night, students need to unplug [from their phone] and be aware of their surroundings.” Flaherty says it’s important to “always know where you are.”
Women’s team preps for busy season

By Donny Neils

Mercer’s Women’s Basketball team has a current season record of 2-6 but the season has just begun, with 17 games remaining.

“This year marks head coach Mike Tenaglia’s twenty-eighth season with Mercer. Tenaglia has over 350 wins under his belt, with a streak of 14 consecutive winning seasons.

Sharing his hopes for the new season, Tenaglia said, “I anticipate this team will be a competitive team, and I’m hoping they will.”

Mercer has 11 total players, five of which are returning sophomore players. Tenaglia appointed sophomore Madison Diaz as Team Captain. Diaz said she would like “to beat teams we really aren’t expected to because...it’s exciting being the underdog.”

The Vikings prepared for the start of the season by playing two scrimmages in October, with a final scrimmage against Ocean County Community College on Tuesday, Oct. 29.

Tenaglia said, “[A scrimmage is] an opportunity for the players to experience college basketball, for the freshmen at least, before we actually have games. You know, it’s more of a learning experience than anything, and hopefully we learn some things from that.”

Besides the scrimmage, the Women’s Vikings have done a lot to prepare for the upcoming season.

According to Athletic Director John Simone, the girls practice at least five days every week. They have practiced both individual and team based drills.

Tenaglia said, “I think if we get to the Region Tournament, anything beyond that would be gravy.”

Men’s basketball high hopes, slow start

By Steve Kolber

The Mercer Vikings’ Men’s Basketball team is gearing up for what they hope is another successful season.

For Head Coach Howard Levy, the start of the season is a chance to keep the program trending upward following the Vikings’ playoff appearance in the 2018-19 season.

When asked about his team’s preparations for the upcoming season, Levy said, “The way we’re trying to teach these guys to play is a little more time consuming maybe than some programs so I just want to make sure we’re on an upward trajectory.”

Levy added, “the [NJCAA] playoffs are definitely a reasonable goal for us.”

James Bruestle, a sophomore center and one of the team captains, says he’s seen the building process before.

“I saw it last year, [coach] always says it’s a struggle early and by December everything starts picking up and everyone starts seeing [the floor] a little better,” Bruestle said.

When asked if the team felt any pressure to perform, Bruestle responded “there is no reason why anyone should have the thought in their mind that this team can achieve anything less than playoffs or even a championship.”

While the team’s core offensive philosophy is generally built around sharing the ball and working to create an open shot, there have been two particular standouts on the court: returning Nottingham alum Kevin Alexis and freshman Tyrae Green, a Philadelphia native.

Green says he’s been enjoying getting his feet wet at the college level, but says he’s just tried to do his best to get acquainted with life at MCCC saying “it’s been good, chill, really quiet...everything’s been going smoothly.”

The preparation has translated to the stat sheet, with Green putting up 23- and 16-point performances in the team’s season opening tournament hosted by the Community College of Rhode Island.

Alexis led the team with 27- and 15-point games against respective opponents Roxbury and CCRI.

When asked about Green, his head coach said “I think he’s very talented and he’s got great instincts for the game, it’s going to take him a little while to learn what to do, but the fact that he’s been pretty effective already says that he’s got a chance to be good.”

Bruestle called both Alexis and Green “very key” but echoed his coach’s preference for sharing the ball when possible adding “we don’t want to have just one or two guys putting up big numbers, we want everybody to put up points and contribute.”

Amongst the less ball dominant players is Alazae Edwards, a freshman from Dimona, Israel who has provided a shooting touch from beyond the arc, giving the Vikings 25 points including 6 of 10 from beyond the arc in the CCRI Tournament.

Edward’s journey to MCCC indicates the reach of the program, but Levy was sure to point out that regardless of where players come from, the priority is on guys who truly want to be here.

“We’re not begging anyone to come here anymore and I think that’s actually helped us in terms of getting some local kids and mostly we’ve been going on recommendations from people we trust, we’ve got some overseas connections and we’ll look at those [recommendations], but that’s how we put this together,” Levy said.

“I think [this particular group] seems to be getting along pretty well just seeing how they’re interacting here [at practice],” Levy said.

The Vikings’ next home game is against Morris County on Thursday, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m.

Admission for all games is free for students and $3.00 for all other persons. Games are played in the gymnasium, located in the Physical Education building on the West Windsor Campus.
Student dance performance

The Happenings of Dance was a student-run dance production that took place at MCCC’s West Windsor campus on November 21 and 22. The student choreographers were Casey Koval, Nasir Jackson and Kayla Plunto.

The concert was done to provide Mercer choreography students the necessary experience in learning to choreograph, rehearse and perform their dances, as well as select them from auditions and the technical qualities that go behind such a performance.

However, Mercer students were not the only participants. Mercer Alumni came to audition for the concert. Guest choreographers included Mercer Alumni Rachel Sanchez and Diego Montealegre, along with current student Emma Bryce.

“I thought it was great, I thought the dancers were very expressive and that it flowed very nicely,” said audience member Sarah Negron.

The performance consisted of ten separate dances, spanning from fun and energetic to emotional and tragic. With themes of death, love and conflict, each routine was followed quickly by the next to keep the audience entertained.

Rebecca Brodowski, the instructor for the Dance 285 class, which is what puts this show on” and the “stage manager, director, all that goes along with that” helped teach these students how to create the show, run it, and practice it.

As a professor, Brodowski thought the showcase “was phenomen-al. I think these dancers really got their message across to the audience, and I think all the hard work that they have put in really has shown through onto the stage.”

The hidden Black box room in the CM building was packed and the show was well received by the audience of locals, parents, and friends who said “we have phenomenal talent at Mercer” and “I thought it was great” or “fantastic.”

Montealegre thought the “dancers were all talented, very hardworking, and I think out of all our winter showcases this is the most exciting, diverse.”

The spring student dance showcase will be May 16 and 17 at 2 p.m. at the Kelsey theater.


PHOTO | ALESSANDRO RIVERO

Guest choreographer and MCCC student Emma Bryce warming up before the performance.

PHOTOGRAPHY | ALESSANDRO RIVERO

The Happenings of Dance

By Alessandro Rivero & Staff of The College VOICE

Student Victoria Pender (left) and Mercer alumna Rachel Sanchez (right) performing Nasir Jackson’s Possession.

PHOTO | ALESSANDRO RIVERO

Victoria I. Smalls performing Nasir Jackson’s Notification.

PHOTO | ALESSANDRO RIVERO
PROBLEM SOLVED: TRANSFER

By Melissa Reyes  Reporter

Many students start their studies at MCCC without thinking about what comes next in their education or what is involved in the transfer process in general. They are just focused on that first semester and getting the hang of being a college student.

Many students, especially those that are the first to go to college in their family, might get a late start thinking about and planning for transfer because they feel unsure or overwhelmed by where to transfer or what to do and have no idea what steps are involved in the transfer process.

**FIND A MENTOR**

Students don’t necessarily know, for example, that it is important to find a mentor who knows the ropes and can take the mystery out of the process. This could be an academic advisor, a trusted professor, a success coach, or someone in transfer services.

A mentor can help a student think about what matters to them and what they want in a transfer school. A specific program? Rural? Urban? In-state? Out of state? Public? Private? A mentor can also help explain things like how to fill out an online application, how to request transcripts, how to ask professors for recommendation letters, and how to write a good application essay.

**VISIT TRANSFER SERVICES**

Director of transfer services, Laurene Jones, says that she notices many students make the mistake of waiting late in their journey at MCCC to talk to a transfer advisor.

“Students often think they can wait until it’s almost time to leave Mercer to gather their information then. It’s really important students start early.”

The common notion is that students at community colleges transfer at the end of their sophomore year, but the definition of a sophomore year is more complex than it seems.

More than half of MCCC students attend part-time and the number of students who complete their Associates degree in two years is under 20%.

**STAY ON TRACK**

For those on the two year track, thinking about the transfer process early is critical, but for everyone else, it’s important not to forget about it along the way because it seems so far away.

**MAKE CONNECTIONS**

Professor Bettina Calo- uri, director of the Honors program at MCCC, explains the importance of making connections.

She says, “Everyone should know how important it is to go to office hours because going to office hours is where a student talks one-on-one with the professor and the professor gets to know them a bit more. You’re automatically forming a stronger impression about how motivated you are because you took the time to go to office hours, but the most important thing is that the professor knows you.”

**CONS**

- The transfer process is generally much easier if you are applying to state schools.
- NJ has some really good transferring schools.
- Going to a public state school is less expensive for students who reside in that state (this isn’t including international students).
- Public colleges in NJ are required to award you all 60 credits if you have completed your Associate’s degree, whereas private or out of state schools may choose not to give credit for some community college classes.
- (Note: If you apply to a private school like Seton Hall or Princeton, your process will be much the same as the out of state transfer process.)

**PROS**

- You have fewer schools to choose from.
- You may have to keep working or keep taking family obligations or be influenced by old friends who may distracting or not be fully supportive.
- You may have less time to focus on studying and maturing and finding your own way in the world.

**STAYING IN STATE**

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**HOW TO START**

**Core Classes**

Start moving through your core classes in Math, English, Communication, Science and Language.

**Try New Things**

Take a variety of Gen Ed classes. To start finding your interests.

**Decide if you want to look out of NJ**

Start moving through your core classes in Math, English, Communication, Science and Language.

**Find a Mentor**

Laurene Jones, the director of transfer services, says that she notices many students make the mistake of waiting late in their journey at MCCC to talk to a transfer advisor.

“Students often think they can wait until it’s almost time to leave Mercer to gather their information then. It’s really important students start early.”

The common notion is that students at community colleges transfer at the end of their sophomore year, but the definition of a sophomore year is more complex than it seems.

More than half of MCCC students attend part-time and the number of students who complete their Associates degree in two years is under 20%.

**Stay on Track**

For those on the two year track, thinking about the transfer process early is critical, but for everyone else, it’s important not to forget about it along the way because it seems so far away.

**Make Connections**

Professor Bettina Calouri, director of the Honors program at MCCC, explains the importance of making connections.

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**Start Your Program at MCCC**

**How to Start**

**Core Classes**

Start moving through your core classes in Math, English, Communication, Science and Language.

**Try New Things**

Take a variety of Gen Ed classes. To start finding your interests.

**Stand Out**

Make a good impression by sitting in the front, raising your hand, getting work in on time, and making steady improvement.

**Office Hours**

Go to office hours even when you don’t need to. Make a good connection with a professor or two that you like.

**Grades**

Work on getting your GPA up.

**Honors**

If you have a strong GPA think about applying to the Honors program which has smaller classes and more academic rigor.

**Activities**

Get involved in activities that will look good to your transfer school.

**Basic Timeline**

**First 15 Credits**

**Second 15 Credits**

**Third**

**RIDE THE TRANSFER TRAIN**

**In State Guaranteed Transfer**

NJ Community Transfer Public 4 Year Schools
Rutgers - Kean - NJIT - William Paterson
Montclair - Rowan - TCNJ - Stockton

**In State Public College-University**

NJ Well Known Private 4 Year Schools
Princeton - Drew - Monmouth - Drew
Rider - Seton Hall - Fairleigh Dickinson

**Out of State Private or Public College-University**

**Requirements**

- Deadlines for each application early
- Several documents including your parents’ tax info unless you are over 23, which case you only need your own

**Early Decision**

Deadline is usually Nov. 1. Apply early decision if you have one school you have your heart set on. If they offer you admission, you are required to go there. You get your decision in December.

**Regular Decision**

Deadline is usually around Jan. 1. You get your answer by May 1.

**FAFSA**

Complete your financial aid application early. You’ll need several documents including your parents’ tax info unless you are over 23, which case you only need your own.
you more as an individual, and that will help when they want to write a letter of recommendation."

A basic timeline Jones says is this: "In the beginning, attend a [transfer] workshop, come in and meet with a counselor and then each semester choose your classes, maybe visit the school, gather information, go to transfer days."

**KNOW THE OPTIONS**

Jones says staying in state and graduating MCCC with an Associate’s Degree is usually what most students decide to do because state schools are lower cost and because NJ has a beneficial transfer law.

"They have to give you 60 credits no matter what," Jones says.

This means that while private and out of state schools may look at a MCCC transcript and not award credit for certain classes, New Jersey state schools are required to give transfer students who have completed their Associates all 60 credits.

This is a law that has benefited many transfer students as well as limiting the programs to 60 credits for each degree program, instead of allowing more credits to be added as requirements.

As a result, most of the transfer workshops at MCCC are held for in state schools. MCCC alumni, Jackson Thompson, who transferred to Rutgers University and is now a Senior majoring in Journalism, says this transfer agreement was very helpful in his decision to stay in-state. He knew that it would be an easier process when transferring credits.

Thompson gives this advice to students, "Treat the transfer process like it’s going to determine your life, so just cherish the process."

But Jones notes that there are resources available on the web for students looking to consider other options. One program that connects a significant number of MCCC students with out of state schools is Mercer Honors and having honors classes on a transcript can look good when it is time to transfer.

**MAKE YOURSELF AN EDGE**

Professor Calouri says, "If it works for someone’s program and they’re a strong student, then the nice thing about an Honors course is that it’s discussion-oriented, and the smaller class size [means] students can function more as leaders. The four year [transfer] schools will assume the student has a level of initiative, and a deeper engagement with a topic, and that can help."

In addition to finding a mentor, going to transfer workshops, and considering Honors classes, other things that help make a student a strong transfer candidate are maintaining a strong Grade Point Average (GPA), and participating in sports or curricular activities, particularly ones that are related to the field they want to study.

Jones says, "The idea is you don’t have to do it alone. That is what we’re here for. We do this day in and day out and meet with students and try to guide them as much as possible.”

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**THE TRANSFER TRAIN**

**CHECK ELIGIBILITY**

Students in certain majors with a high enough GPA may, in some cases, other factors may be qualified to automatically get into certain NJ schools. Check if your program and if you qualify.

www.mccc.edu/student_services/transcript_dual.shtml

**FILL OUT FORMS**

There is often an “Admit to enroll” form that you need to fill out in a timely manner. Check deadlines. Call the school’s transfer office to be sure you didn’t miss anything.

**COMMON APP**

Most schools use the Common Application which must be completed online. You can fill it out once and then submit it to multiple schools. Start it early and save it as.

**TRANSCRIPTS**

You will need to fill out a form to get copies of your official transcripts (lists all your courses and grades) from MCCC, any other colleges you’ve gone to, and sometimes your high school. You may have to do this more than once.

**REC LETTERS**

Ask 2 professors whose classes you’ve done well in and with whom you’ve made a connection, if they will write a recommendation letter for you. Ask them well in advance of the deadline.

**ESSAYS**

The Common App has several written portions and you have to write them well to get into good schools. While you start, work on it, then consult with a trusted mentor for advice on how to improve it.

**SUBMIT**

Make sure you’ve read over and completed every portion of your Common App to the very best of your ability. Proofread one more time. Then if SUBMIT.

**WAIT**

Different schools take different lengths of time to review your work. Watch your calendar.

Wait to hear from all your schools then talk through your options with a mentor. Make your pick and respond YES to your new school and NO to the others.

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**MAKE CONTACT**

Be in touch with the admissions offices at each school you are interested in. Double check that you have the right deadlines. Ask if you qualify to get application fees waived.

**TAKE SATs IF NEEDED**

Not every transfer school asks for standardized test scores, but many do. Starting this process early is key. Jones says:

1. Check if school requires it for you.
2. Apply to get five waiver call 888-SAT-HELP.
3. Register to take the test on a date before your application deadlines.
5. Take the test.
6. Make sure scores are sent to correct schools.

**COMPLETE ANY SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS**

Some schools ask for extra items like a sample graded essay from class, additional grade reports, or a portfolio of work. If you are applying to a specialized program like art, design, or film. Take care of special requirements early. Check that each school received what they needed.

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**NOTE**

The goal of this chart is to give students a basic starting point for thinking about transfer decisions and plans. It is not a substitute for talking to an advisor.

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Find Multimedia Content for this Article Online

mcccvoice.org/transfer-train
Swimming: a free health benefit at MCCC

By Aaliyah Patel
Reporter

Mercer provides free Zumba classes in the PE building at 12-1 p.m. on Tuesdays. Colleen Skillman has been the instructor since 2010 having gotten her certification and started working at gyms like the Hamilton YMCA and Retro Fitness. Skillman is licensed to teach Zumba, Zumba Kids & Kids Jr. According to the Mayo Clinic’s website, “Zumba is a fitness program that combines Latin and international music with dance moves. Zumba routines incorporate interval training — alternating fast and slow rhythms — to help improve cardiovascular fitness.” Zumba is a trademarked style that originated in the 1990’s by Alberto “Beto” Perez, a Columbian dancer and choreographer.

Brittney Major, a student in William Patterson’s University program at Mercer, says, “When you go to Zumba, you don’t think about anything else, just that you want to have a good time.”

Skillman says “Here we have all different fitness levels and all different ages, I try to make everyone feel comfortable. I always tell people to do their level of fitness. You can go all out to get a higher workout or be a bit more gentle depending on your fitness level.”

There are several health benefits that come from doing Zumba. According to the Mayo Clinic, Zumba is an aerobic activity that can count toward the amount of aerobic activity recommended for most healthy adults by the Department of Health and Human Services...if you enjoy Zumba, you’re also more likely to do it regularly and experience its benefits as an aerobic exercise.

When asked, “What do you think needs to be changed in order to improve Zumba?” a current participant said: “More classes a week would be great!”

MCCE offers free Zumba classes to students and staff

By Kaylee Reyes
Staff of The College VOICE

Mercer’s fitness center offers students daily non-competitive open swim time at the Fitness Center, promoting health benefits at no additional costs. Recreational swimming can help students remain well-conditioned according to Erin Cahill-Wetzel, Coordinator of the Fitness Center and Swimming Pool.

“Swimming promotes great cardiorespiratory development because it heavily involves the upper and lower body. It’s low impact so it does not have the pounding and stress of movements like walking or running,” Cahill-Wetzel said.

The swimming pool is also heated, providing a healing environment that targets body aches and stiffness.

Cahill-Wetzel says that “Water can help provide relief to sore muscles and joints and can help promote recovery. Our pool is kept warm to try to accommodate all groups that use our pool ranging from toddlers to senior citizens.”

Community members are required to purchase membership passes at either monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annual rates. Monthly rates can be as low as $31 and annual rates can be as high as $225. These passes give members full access to all of the facilities.

Seanna Kelly, a chemistry and biology major at Mercer, is a lifeguard at the fitness center. She shares how full-body workouts are a good alternative to other strenuous forms of exercise since it can relieve body pain.

“I’ve been playing water polo for most of my life (swimming) technically works out your entire body and it does help with joint problems because you’re not putting as much pressure on them.”

Swimming also offers students the opportunity to strengthen muscular organs through aerobic exercises.

“It also promotes your heart because it’s like a steady cardio,” Kelly says. “For students and community members who are interested in swimming but are not experienced, the fitness center offers swim programs.”

Lizeth Perez, a biology major at Mercer, said she thinks more students would use the pool if they were made aware of the fact that one is on campus.

“I would go if their hours were expanded and if they promoted it more because I didn’t even know we had a pool.”

With the end of the semester approaching, Cahill-Wetzel encourages students to use the pool as a form of stress management.

“Any form of exercise helps with stress management. Getting into the pool can be particularly relaxing for your muscles, so I think it’s a great option for students as finals approach and stress levels are high.”

-Erin Cahill-Wetzel, Coordinator of Fitness

Review: Impossible Whopper, deceptive and delicious

By Aaliyah Patel
Reporter

Burger King is now offering an Impossible Whopper that is 100% vegan, as long as you don’t get it with mayo or cheese. Impossible Burger is a line of food products that are available widely outside of just Burger King. In addition to a bunch of unpronounceable ingredients, the Impossible website says their products contain wheat protein, coconut oil and potato protein. Something called “heme” a soy derivative that produces their notable juicy taste. The Impossible Whopper is “More for meat-eaters who want to try eating vegetarian but still like to eat meat!”

Alex Santos, a second year Digital Arts major, said, “It fooled me. If I didn’t know it was an Impossible Whopper I wouldn’t have been able to say Hey, you just gave me something different from a Whopper!”

Kristina Hontz, a first year art major who describes herself as more of a chicken person, said “I don’t eat at Burger King a lot, but they did a good job.”

One person enjoyed the burger but was skeptical about its meatiness. Vegetarian Donny Neuls, a first year Liberal Arts major, said he felt the Impossible Whopper is “More for meat-eaters who want to try eating vegetarian but still like to eat meat.”

Peering into the future, Neuls’s perspective is backed up by fact, as a recent New York Times article notes, “The market research firm NPD Group says that 90 percent of the customers purchasing them are meat-eaters who believe the products are more healthful and better for the environment.”

Multiple sources report an intense conflict between the beef industry which claims Impossible (and its cousin Beyond) are unhealthful poseurs, and Impossible saying that the beef industry is just riled up because they don’t like what’s coming for them. In this fight, Impossible seems to have an edge, at least in terms of taste.

Media adviser Holly Johnson remarked, “It’s like the weird people you wouldn’t usually hang out with but who turn out to be cool after all.”

Ben Levitt, a first year Advanced Manufacturing Technology major said “I started out skeptical. I left confused. How is it not bad? This feels wrong.”

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Ben Levitt, a first year Advanced Manufacturing Technology major said “I started out skeptical. I left confused. How is it not bad? This feels wrong.”
Haitian focus inspires Lawrenceville’s Café Du Pain

By Thomas Lilja Reporter

French chants by local Haitian singer Moun Stand are playing background as, on this cool winter’s morning, a local customer sets her backpack aside, and she begins to brave the cold to walk to Café Du Pain. She is, of course, not alone. The cafe is decorated in vibrant green colors and paint splashed by Kicha Lugo, owner of a local beauty salon. The cafe is decorated in this way to reflect the community outreach. According to Café Du Pain’s Developer of Business and Community Outreach, Onyeani, the cafe is a place where the community can come together and feel appreciated. Onyeani says that inspiration for Café Du Pain’s menu items for Café Du Pain, when creating new items for Café Du Pain, would be the community that could be better, “We want a space where people can come together and socialize,” she says. “We want to create an environment where people can feel comfortable and welcome.”

It is this feeling that has brought Café Du Pain to the attention of many. The cafe is located in Lawrenceville, NJ, and it is a place where people can come to enjoy a variety of foods. The cafe is open from 11:00am until 2:00am daily and even extends to 4:00am on Fridays and Saturdays.

As winter rapidly approaches, Café Du Pain Bakery in Lawrenceville, NJ, is a bastion of baking industry. According to Café Du Pain’s Developer of Business and Community Outreach, Onyeani, the cafe is a place where people can come to enjoy a variety of foods. The cafe is open from 11:00am until 2:00am daily and even extends to 4:00am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Café Du Pain maintains a focus on international food, making it a perfect spot for those looking to try new and exotic dishes. The cafe’s menu is broken down into different categories, such as “Savory Leaf Cheesesteaks,” “VIB” cheesesteaks, and ham bread. It is a place where people can come to enjoy a variety of foods. The cafe is open from 11:00am until 2:00am daily and even extends to 4:00am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Another patron, Andy Erman, says, “I’ve been a vegetarian for over 10 years now and have never had a vegan cheesesteak. I was thoroughly impressed, and have been coming back to get this sandwich ever since I first tried it.”

If you are in the mood for something a bit lighter, they also have their soup of the day ($5), and their seasonally inspired salads ($6-$10). To top it off, they have a selection of fresh baked desserts for $2 to $3. Their beverage menu consists of organic coffees and teas ($2 as well as bottled water ($1.25).

Café Du Pain is also the perfect spot for those looking to try new and exotic dishes. The cafe’s menu is broken down into different categories, such as “Savory Leaf Cheesesteaks,” “VIB” cheesesteaks, and ham bread. It is a place where people can come to enjoy a variety of foods. The cafe is open from 11:00am until 2:00am daily and even extends to 4:00am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Café Du Pain Bakery in Lawrenceville, NJ, is known for its delicious baked goods. While the chocolate works well with this butter, it also blends perfectly with the almonds and where neither flavor seems to outweigh another. For those who are more traditional in their food choices, Café Du Pain also sells chocolate almond croissants. With a price of $4.75, the croissant features a soft, flaky consistency that is accompanied by a buttery taste. While the chocolate works well with this butter, it also blends perfectly with the almonds and powdered sugar sprinkled on top. According to Café Du Pain’s Developer of Business and Strategy of Partnership Judith Registre, the bakery intentionally sources their ingredients based on where they come from. For example, Café Du Pain Bakery sells La Colombier Coffee, originally from the company’s workshops in Haiti.

Speaking of hot drinks, Café Du Pain is currently selling spiced hot chocolate as a seasonal item for $2.98. While the drink’s spice is well pronounced, it slightly overwhelms the chocolate. As such, it is best to let the drink cool slightly before indulging.

Friends enjoy a coffee break at Café Du Pain in Lawrenceville. The cafe is a place where people can come to enjoy a variety of foods. The cafe is open from 11:00am until 2:00am daily and even extends to 4:00am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Whether you prefer wings, ten dollars or cash only, and they aren’t on any Deliveries, however, are cash only, and they aren’t on any popular delivery services, but the food is worth the drive.

The chicken you need, with taste and speed

By Steve Kolber Reporter

The semester is ending and you’ve reached the academic boiling point with exams and papers backing up on you. Also, you’re starving.

At moments like these, students do have options. For Wawa and QuickChek. One such option is Chicken-To-Go, an establishment that is an island at the intersection of Chambers Street and Route 206 in Trenton.

Chicken-To-Go specializes in prepared fried chicken as well as a number of sauces and sides, and as the name suggests, it is available to takeout, which is the best option since the dine-in area is underwhelming with only a few more seats than Pac-Man machines (one).

But as long as you are able to navigate the triangular parking lot, the trip is worth it. Whether you prefer wings, tenders, or classically fried chicken, Chicken-To-Go will get dishes in your hands quickly and without the grease that is associated with fried foods.

One local, Percy Lopez holds Chicken-To-Go’s buffalo chicken sandwich in the highest regard, mentioning only Princeton’s legendary Hoagie Haven as a potential rival.

The establishment is open from 11:00am until 2:00pm every day and even extends to 4:00am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Deliveries, however, are cash only, and they aren’t on any of the popular delivery services, but the food is worth the drive.

Day after day and even extends to 4:00am on Fridays and Saturdays.
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WE SEE A FUTURE LEADER

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How clean are the labs?

By Bianca Martinez & Saad Ahmed
Senior Reporters

Among faculty in the sciences at Mercer, concerns exist regarding its steps to address cleanliness in offices, classrooms, and labs. Professors specifically worry about the potential safety risks it poses to students and fellow colleagues.

When asked about the steps the administration has taken to fix the problem, Carlo Alfare, Professor of Chemistry at Mercer, says, “[the college] gives the [cleaning] contract to the lowest bidder and they’re not going to send [extra] people here to clean. Look at these floors.”

Ellen Genovesi, Professor of Biology says, “We have a lot of concerns, in particular, the cleaning of the lab floors. It was obvious that they really hadn’t been mopped in quite a long time and they were getting really, really dirty.”

Dirty lab floors pose risks, professors say, especially with the series of mold-related problems Mercer has had in the past two years.

Genovesi states, “It’s overall cleanliness. It’s also, we had a lot of problems last year with mold in the labs. We had mold growth on everything. We had items inside cabinets that were covered with mold.”

Meredit took the necessary steps to remediate the mold problem, however, Genovesi says.

“Maintenance did a lot of work in controlling the humid- ity. We have permanently mounted dehumidifiers that have pumps. It automatically emtures itself, so the humidity levels have been fairly low considering how wet it was at the beginning of the semester,” Genovesi says, but notes that this doesn’t address the issue of cleanliness that they are facing now.

Genovesi states, “I had asked several individuals for a copy of the cleaning contract. I really didn’t get anywhere with that, so I put an OPRA request. It’s a request for open, public doc- uments, because I really want- ed to look at it and see, you know, what had the cleaning company promised to deliver? Are our ex- pections too high? Are our ex- pections too low?”

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- Ellen Genovesi, Professor of Biology

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 expectations too high? Are our ex- pections too low?”

Other tasks, like clean- ing the whiteboards daily, were hit and miss according to Genovesi, even though it was in- cluded in the contract.

Chemistry faculty are particularly vigilant about lab cleanliness since many chemi- cals and biohazard items are stored there.

Professor Alfare says, “They have got to be careful because they can’t just grab a bottle and move it. If it’s an acid, for instance, and they drop it, they don’t know what’s in it.”

Professor Genovesi adds that things have been get- ting better since meeting with the regional manager of ABM, the company that provides the cleaning services at Mercer.

She says, “So, probably in the last three, four years, it has improved,” while explaining that the process took about seven weeks into the semester to get started.

Outside of the science department, questions remain whether or not other areas at Mercer are getting properly cleaned.
Can we get some peace and quiet?
Long term pros demand better plan for short term cons

Kristina Hontz

I arrived at Mercer just in time for the construction. When you look through the bunched over fence by the Fine Arts building you can see an empty wasteland. However, the place is way more active than it seems. One day in my 2D Design class, I remember a student trying to explain their art piece to me. It was right outside the window for a critique. All of a sudden drilling away at the ground. I was right outside the window for the construction, he is more concerned about the sounds of construction than the impact it would have on current classrooms could at least be improved. And even about the sounds of construction Winogora stated that “the idea was proposed by [the College’s president] Dr. Wang and presented to the 4-5 university partners at the time.”

So right off the bat this center was going to be utilized by multiple universities and was planned way in advance. I appreciate that, but how much discussion was there about the impact it would have on current students who have paid their tuition and are trying to get an education? The construction is also a pain for the Fine Arts professors. An Adjunct Professor at Mercer, Dave DiMarchi, teaches Printmaking and 2D Design in the FA building. He says the main concerns are not even about the sounds of construction, he is more concerned about “the long term future of the current FA building or the immediate future of holding classes in current spaces.” DiMarchi adds that “the biggest interruption to most seems to be the loss of the faculty/staff parking lot adjacent to the FA building.”

And even though DiMarchi works “on a less populated day,” this loss of a parking lot has negatively affected professors. Some students are sliding into the other spots being cordoned off for faculty at the edge of the student lot and professors say they are frustrated with the situation, no matter how temporary it may be. And how long is it supposed to take? Clearly a while longer.

While researching for this article I did come around a bit on the whole thing. My view was shifted in particular by Professor Winogora’s new hope for the identity for his university students. With this new center, he says students and coordinators of different universi
ties can “more or less identify ourselves as universities. Many students feel that they want a sense of differentiation between the community college and the universities. So we will be working on that for their purposes.”

If I was one of those students, I can understand it would be quite confusing having to go on a campus that is not really your own. Professor Winogora also mentioned a secondary issue I hadn’t considered at all. He said, “When President Trump put a tariff on steel, it significantly raised the price which forced cutbacks on the original plans. And as a result the center probably is somewhat smaller than anticipated. But the action was of President Trump...and NOT the president of the college.”

That makes sense, and I can see the pros outweigh the cons. It’s not like I want them to stop building the center, I understand that it’s important. I’m sure there will be good that comes from the chaos. And with growth comes growing pains, but the incoming stu
dents weren’t warned and fine art studies require quiet concentration. If the project can’t be helped, maybe some of our classrooms could at least be temporarily moved until it is completed? Is that so much to ask?

Laurie’s 7 Holiday Gift Ideas

By Laurie Gallagher

In her ongoing “Learn from Me” column, Laurie Gallagher offers explanations and tips for students on every day topics, with support from the staff of The VOICE.

Holidays can be full of fun, food, traveling to see family. But they can also be stressful especially for college students trying to find the right presents for people in our lives and staying on a budget. Here are 7 ideas to help.

1. FUZZY HAT AND MITTENS
2. HANDY WATER BOTTLE (STAY HYDRATED!)
3. YOU CAN’T GO WRONG WITH GIFT CARDS
4. PERFECT COCOA MUG
5. USEFUL OFFICE SUPPLIES
6. NEW YEAR: NEW CALENDAR!
7. AIR POPPER FOR COZY TV NIGHTS

Do you see a typo? Good. Join the staff and help us fix it! Mon + Thur 12-1:15 in ET 127

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!
The college is obliged to keep us informed and safe in an emergency

MCCC is not able to handle communications during an emergency and that has to change.

A fire occurred in the second-floor women’s bathroom of the Liberal Arts building that caused an evacuation of several hundred students on Thursday, November 14 and the entire event showed how unprepared Mercer is to handle emergency situations.

As soon as the event occurred a message should have been sent out via the college’s MAAlert system letting students, faculty and staff know basic information such as: the fire is in the LA building, it is being contained by firefighters, for safety’s sake no one should enter the building, and anyone with knowledge about the event should contact security.

Instead, nearly five hours passed before an MAAlert finally arrived but it said only that classes were cancelled in the LA building for the rest of the day due to “unforeseen maintenance repairs.” By that point classes were already over.

Slow response time put people at risk of physical harm.

Because people who were in other parts of the campus during the initial evacuation received no notification, and doors to the LA building remained open, many walked right back into a building that was literally on fire.

The fire alarms went off at 1:50 p.m. and security guards were finally escorting faculty and staff out of their offices on their floor by 4 p.m.

To be clear, the burden should not have been on our security force to instantly secure an entire building with numerous entrances and exits. The administration needed to alert the community so that security could do their job.

The wording of the message that finally did go out is just as problematic as how long it took to send it.

The phrase, “unforeseen maintenance repairs,” was used in the alert instead of the word “fire.” "Unforeseen maintenance repairs" was the term used on the signs put on the doors to the building, and on the college website noting the building closure as well.

In fact, at no point in time the college used the word “fire” to describe what happened.

Every word in the English language has meaning. There is a significant difference between “unforeseen maintenance repairs” and “fire.”

Relying on euphemisms is not a good PR strategy and saying face shouldn’t take precedent over people’s safety.

To get people out of a building and keep them out, you have to make it clear what is really going on.

Furthermore that bathroom is busy at 1:50pm and someone might have seen something that could have helped with the investigation into what happened, but there was no notification about who to call or indication that anyone cared if you did have information about the so called “unforeseen maintenance repairs” and “fire.”

What happens when administration doesn’t keep the campus informed is that information—sometimes inaccurately—is shared via social media instead. People basically pick stuff up off the street. That is no way to handle an emergency.

The VOICE worked to cover the story quickly and get accurate information out within 24 hours of the event but it wasn’t easy.

We were told of an elaborate procedure for getting MAAlerts sent out, one involving prior approval from the PR office and the college president. The president shouldn’t be signing off on telling us the college is on fire.

We were also told that there was a problem with the campus phone systems which is what slowed down the MAAlert being sent out. If that’s true then you have another example of the college being unprepared for an emergency. There has to be a back up plan if there’s a problem with the phone system.

Next we were told that MAAlerts are only sent out when the entire campus is closed which would explain why basically only ever get them if school is closed for snow. The whole school wasn’t closed because of the fire, but the whole school was needed to know to avoid a potential danger on the campus.

Other schools are proactive when there is a problem. They don’t try to cover up what’s going on or make a fire sound like some loose floor boards or a leaky pipe or something.

Mercer’s reaction to campus emergencies is NOT normal and it’s not safe. What if there had been a shooter on campus? What if the blaze had been bigger?

Students, faculty and staff deserve transparency and the truth and it needs to come in a timely manner.

We, the Editorial Board of The College VOICE, call on the college administration to create a reliable, easy to understand plan of action and use it for future emergency situations.

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, and include your name and status at Mercer (major and year, faculty or staff position or alumni). All materials submitted become the property of The College VOICE, which reserves the right to reject or edit material based on length, tone or clarity.

Editorial Policy:
The College VOICE is written and edited by students of Mercer County Community College and published every 3-4 weeks under the guidance of faculty advisers. The material printed in The College VOICE, be it articles, advertisements or opinion pieces, does not necessarily represent the views of the editors, the faculty, staff, administration or the board of trustees of Mercer County Community College.
ASK THE VOICE: GOOD ANSWERS TO TOUCH QUESTIONS

Dear VOICE, I saw my professor crying in the hallway. What is the protocol for this situation?
-Eek

Dear Eek, Leave them alone seeing another student might add to their depression.
-VOICE

Dear Freshie, I'm so anxious about the end of the semester and finals. What should I do?
-Congfused Freshie

Dear Confused Freshie, Help. It's December and the weather is getting colder. It's time to just tell them to give you some room.
-The VOICE

Dear Student, I haven't slept in 3 days because I'm so anxious about the end of the semester and finals. What should I do?
-Sincerely, Severely Stressed Student

Dear Severely Stressed Student, It's December and the weather is getting colder. It's time to just tell them to give you some room.
-The VOICE

Dear Freezing Student, There are Unforeseen Maintenance Repairs in the L.A. Building instead of a fire?
-Freezing Student

Dear Confused Student, There are Unforeseen Maintenance Repairs in the L.A. Building instead of a fire?
-Confused Student

Dear Confused Student, It's December and the weather is getting colder. It's time to just tell them to give you some room.
-The VOICE

Dear VOICE, I haven't slept in 3 days because I'm so anxious about the end of the semester and finals. What should I do?
-Sincerely, Severely Stressed Student

Dear Severely Stressed Student, It's December and the weather is getting colder. It's time to just tell them to give you some room.
-The VOICE

Dear Hooverboard, or taking the free Zumba classes to increase your cardio. See page 10.
-Voice

Dear Confused Student, Why is MCCC saying that there isn't a protocol for this situation?
-Confused Student

Dear Confused Student, It's December and the weather is getting colder. It's time to just tell them to give you some room.
-The VOICE

Dear Freezing Student, Help. There's still more to do. Make time to slow down and care for yourself that hasn't always been possible lately. Good news: you'll have a break soon. Now is the time to catch up with yourself.
-Freezing Student

Taurus
Apr. 20 - May 20
During the bustle of the holiday season some small things are getting on your nerves and starting to add up. Before you get road rage or hell at someone at Target, go for a walk in the woods. Breath.

Virgo
Aug. 23 - Sept. 22
Warmth and friendship will surround you this month and you will be able to relax. A solution finally comes for a problem you've been thinking about a lot.

Libra
Sept. 23 - Oct. 22
Animals are your friends during the bustle of the holiday season some small things are getting on your nerves and starting to add up. Before you get road rage or hell at someone at Target, go for a walk in the woods. Breath.

Scorpio
Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
Someone you've lost is looking down and sending you love right now. You are not alone. There is support for you that you may not be able to see, but you can feel if you hold still and reach out with your heart.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
Two and two doesn't always make four if each one of those things has a million little parts. Save yourself a headache and commit to doing a little less for the next few weeks.

Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 19
There's always that one person who won't leave you alone, no matter how many times you excuse yourself and go hide in a bathroom stall. It's time to just tell them to give you some room.

Aquarius
Jan. 20 - Feb. 18
As the semester winds to a close don't get cocky. There's still more to do. Keep organized and stay focused or you'll get blindsided by tasks you should have seen coming.

Pisces
Feb. 19 - Mar. 20
How many times do the stars have to tell you that if you help people you will get help in return. Karma is real. If that little old lady needs help crossing the street, you know what to do.

Aries
Mar. 21 - Apr. 19
Although you want to make time to slow down and care for yourself that hasn't always been possible lately. Good news: you'll have a break soon. Now is the time to catch up with yourself.

Leo
Jul. 23 - Aug. 22
Two and two doesn't always make four if each one of those things has a million little parts. Save yourself a headache and commit to doing a little less for the next few weeks.

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