Roughly 10-15 percent of MCCC’s currently enrolled 6,200 students have returned to campus for classes either full time or in a hybrid format this fall according to the admissions office.

The primary classes being offered include lab sciences, nursing, hospitality, aviation, and funeral services which fits with the official restart plan the college released back in early May.

In fact, “Mercer was the very first higher education institution in the state of New Jersey to submit a comprehensive plan” said President Dr. Wang.

According to John Simone, Assistant Dean of Students and a co-leader of the reopening task force, while enrollment “is about 16 percent down from where it was last year, that is not too bad as other colleges are reporting 30-40 percent down.”

That statistic is also expected to decrease as the college’s ten and seven week courses begin. Simone reports the college anticipated enrollment would be down 15 percent and budgeted accordingly.

In order to survive this deficit Mercer “didn’t cut anything but they did not fill some open positions. If people retired or left the college, we kept their positions open and only hired the positions that were critical to the college” Simone added.

Although some students and faculty reported positive tests for coronavirus over the summer, since the semester has started no students or faculty in the on campus classes has reported symptoms of COVID-19.

According to College President Dr. Jianping Wang, “We have a very robust process in place.” The system includes students filling out a symptom tracking form prior to every campus visit. According to Simone, this has two purposes, “one for contact tracing and also for someone to self evaluate how they are feeling prior to putting others at risk.”

Dr. Wang says, “It is in your best interest to honestly assess yourself and not cover up illnesses or symptoms. Without health, there will be no academic progress. With health everything is possible. A make up class is possible. Retaking a class is possible. Restarting a semester is possible. But if you are dead, nothing is possible.”

In order to increase safety, the college has provided faculty members and students on campus with “medical grade face shields” produced by our own manufacturing department. In addition to that, MCCC has been taking extra precautions by cleaning the buildings and laboratories regularly after each class with EPA approved disinfectants.

Despite all the safety precautions, teaching Chemistry and Biology doesn’t always allow for distancing and looking through a microscope presents a unique concern since touching face and eyes is a key method of COVID transmission. But frequent disinfecting between uses is now the norm in MCCC classes.
Dating apps are hot despite pandemic
Many young people ignore health risks in pursuit of romance

By Serena Bolitho
Senior Reporter

Colleges have gone fully remote, social events have been cancelled, and travel has been restricted, but young people aren’t taking the situation lying down. Subscriptions to online dating apps such as Tinder are soaring and the companies are seeing massive revenue spikes.

An article released by the Dallas Morning News says Tinder, “known for swiping to like or dislike other users’ profiles, continues to be the [Match Group’s] key driver of growth, with a 15% spike in direct revenue in the three-month period ending June 30.”

With continually changing orders and CDC guidelines about what type of interactions are safe and appropriate during a global pandemic, apps like “Bumble” now let its users “add a badge to their profiles that signifies what kind of dates they’re comfortable with: virtual, socially distanced or socially distanced with a mask.”

Dalia Badr, a Psychology Professor at MCCC, says, “It is ok if staying away is temporary but explains there is a reason why young people might go on non-socially distanced dates anyway.

Diane Cardona, a second-year Biology major, is currently taking classes on campus, she said, “I feel like being on campus gives me the hope of things going back to normal prior to Covid-19. Although I understand we will have to become accustomed to this new normal, I appreciate all of the new implementations in place to ensure cleanliness and safety for both students and staff. But it only makes me question what we will be used to in the past prior to these new sanitation measures.”

Similarly, Sophia Boor, a second-year Biology major, said “Attending class on campus was difficult to adjust to for the first few days. However, as a science major I am very grateful to be able to attend labs and better understand the material I’m studying. I believe the best part of the college experience is building relationships with professors and other students who are pursuing the same goals. I am thankful that Mercer is still providing a means for me to be able to make those connections.”

Organic Chemistry is one of the classes that was considered Priority 1 for face to face instruction in the Restart Task Force document. It is now following a hybrid format and health precautions are being taken. Classroom students are given their own name hoods to work in and wear masks, goggles, and gloves as well. They attend class person on person every other week for labs but meet weekly over Zoom for lectures.

Professor Tanzini who is teaching multiple sections of Organic Chemistry this fall said, “I’m really happy to have a hybrid course as I think it is very hard to teach labs online especially for organic chemistry.” She added, “I feel very safe in the lab and credits this to the preparation done by the Task Force.

As for whether or not more face to face classes will be added in the spring, such as the Priority 2 classes from the Restart Task Force plan—which include ones like Public Speaking and Dance- Simone says the task force is being reconvened to and will be “meeting soon” to work out the details of spring instruction.

“The late teen and early adulthood brain development is very different in terms of priorities, expectations and fears. It’s very different compared to full adulthood. Risk taking differs from someone 20 to someone 35+.”

Dalia Badr, Psychology Professor

Students currently on campus take extra care cleaning their workspaces.

For young people, dating has become a push and pull between a desire for connection and a need for safety during the pandemic.

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Continued from page 1

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The Blue Bears in Princeton stands out in every way
Featuring chefs with developmental disabilities, it’s the food that stands out

By Elijah Parkman-Williams
Reporter

Since May of 2019 The Blue Bears restaurant has been serving European food and pastries in Princeton, at the shopping plaza on Harrison Street. The restaurant provides jobs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Blue Bears serves as a teaching environment and a place to build self-sufficiency and confidence.

But it all still comes down to the food.

Upon your first visit to the Blue Bears kitchen you will be delighted in the fact that your experience will remain simple. The only thing complex about this restaurant lies not in the culinary talents of their artistry, but the hearts of every staff member there.

Chef Eric Wimmer and Chef Marco, two culinary greats that have made their way around Princeton and yet stand to serve their community at this restaurant. Blue Bears: Special Meals serves simple food with high class techniques, resulting in a dining experience that can barely be described through words.

Start with the soup and salad. Like most restaurants, these dishes are meant to prepare the diner for the rest of the course, but Blue Bears already proves themselves as elite with this starter plate.

The lentil soup is rich and hearty especially for a vegan soup, but the star of this starting plate is the Cevonole Salad. The cevonole salad is essentially a fig salad. The dish consists of five ingredients: arugula, balsamic vinegar, croutons, goat feta, and black mission figs. As individual ingredients they shine on their own, but it’s in combination with the salty, crunchy croutons, and feta cheese. The ingredients all come together with the true star, the black mission fig. It is vibrant and sweet, and when paired with the other ingredients they transitional into a harmony of flavor that can be compared to their entire counterparts.

As you eat this dish you taste fresh arugula in partnership with the tangy homemade vinaigrette. Following this delightful pairing you will be met with the salty, crunchy croutons as well as its opposing textured partner in crime of the creamy feta cheese. The ingredients all come together with the true star, the black mission fig. It is vibrant and sweet, and when combined with the other ingredients creates a harmonious symphony of flavor that can be compared to their entire counterparts.

If you are interested in something heartier then look no further than the Lasagna. Chef Marco describes the lasagna as a collaboration of the most simple raw ingredients baked into a single dish. The beef will smash your taste buds straight into the chunky tomato sauce. The tomato sauce is rich, but its acidic notes are balanced by the slightly bitter spinach. It’s only then you realize the swiss cheese is not overpowering, but a back seat flavor to the mouthwatering beef. All this only to be dressed in the decadent bechamel sauce that is absolutely to die for. Chef Marco describes it best “each ingredient speaks for itself.”

After a fresh salad and hearty beef lasagna try the perch fish cooked in browned butter and capers served on a bed of the best spinach. It will be the best preparation you will ever experienced.

The weight of the fork tears the perch so tenderly, revealing its succulent meat, rich in brown buttery goodness. The anticipated bite will dance atop your taste buds in the most elegant way until you bite the capers. The capers are tiny bursts of salty bombs, pairing exlantely with the fish. This dish is exquisite, perfectly seasoned and balanced.

Below is a bed of spinach that rounds the dish to its building crescendos. This spinach soaks up the brown butter and capers into an entirely different combination of flavor, but there is still one more pairing yet discovered. The perch and spinach, these two in combination serve as the greatest flavor combinations to come.

The flavors jump back and forth across the tongue until they marry into a cohesive bond, it is absolutely spectacular. This plate is more than underrated, it is an underdog dish that should be revered through all of Princeton, New Jersey and further.

What is a food review without dessert to tie it all together? Try the almond flour pineapple cake. Thinly sliced bright pineapple slices layered between puff pastry and baked in butter. What else could you want? It’s sweet, salty, creamy, and so much more. It was the best dish possible to finish a meal such as this one.

The Blue Bears has proved to create some of the best dishes in all of Princeton, but how are they planning to grow in the future with the trials of being a young business during COVID-19?

After facing a depleting market of traffic customers Blue Bears decided to start online orders. They are even preparing themselves for the Winter, ready to take their dining to a heated outdoors so people can still experience the restaurant.

If you are looking forward to a new menu then you are also in luck. Blue Bears changes their menu every day according to the season and ingredients, but the most exciting news is what they want to accomplish for their menu. The Blue Bears staff explain how they want to introduce a world of different flavors to the restaurant.

Chef Erin proudly proclaims “We are not an Italian restaurant. We are not a Chinese restaurant, we are not a French restaurant. We are an everyone restaurant.”

The current employees of The Blue Bears in Princeton.
In March of 2020 to slow the spread of Covid-19 lockdown started. Everything closed except essential businesses like hospitals and supermarkets. Schools converted to online instruction.

By June, everyone had a mask, but at first masks were hard to find and with shortages of protective gear for medical workers, regular people were asked not to buy them. By summer’s end health officials made it clear that masks were a key factor in fighting transmission of covid-19. At the same time, mask wearing became politicized during a heated presidential election cycle, with conservatives saying masks violate their personal liberties.

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In May, the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was killed by a police officer kneeling on his neck for 8 minutes, sparked a wave of protests against police brutality. The Black Lives Matter movement gained popular support. Rallies were held nationwide and in many other countries. They continue today despite the pandemic, fanned by the deaths of people such as Breonna Taylor, Elijah McClain, and many more.

ABOVE: New Jersey’s Governor, Phil Murphy, officially locked down the state on March 18, 2020. Many schools, including MCCC had already suspended classes and moved online several days earlier.

ABOVE: On June 6, 2020 hundreds of locals gathered in Trenton to protect the death of George Floyd. Events like it continued for days. Although most were peaceful and none seemed to cause any spike in covid-19 incidences a few escalated into violence.

With social distancing being a key goal of reducing virus spread, people had to get creative about celebrating birthdays, graduations, and other accomplishments. Drive by processions became popular.

ABOVE: On June 6, 2020 members of the Trenton Police Department took a knee to show support for a Black Lives Matter rally that converged on the steps of City Hall.

LEFT: A Jersey resident celebrated her family member Larry’s 70th birthday with a sign waved as she drove by in her camper. BELOW: At Ground for Sculpture in Trenton even the sculptures took up mask wearing for safety.

At some Black Lives Matter rallies and George Floyd vigils, police there to help with safety and crowd control, took a knee in recognition of the validity of the cause and to show solidarity with the protestors. Many police departments began reevaluating the role of policing in the community.

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Graffiti Pier: private property for public expression

By Alessandro Rivero
Senior Reporter

Forty minutes from MCCC’s Trenton campus, on private property owned by Conrail at the edge of the Delaware River lies “graffiti pier.”

Every part of concrete is covered in paint or art. Often when you go you can find an artist, cans sprawled on the floor, working on a new piece. Fishermen crowd the edge, teens climb trees to the roof, and lovers set up tents and watch the stars.

The exact location of the pier was long kept secret. Visitors passed on how to get there by word of mouth. But despite occasional efforts by police to crack down on trespassers for safety’s sake, most of the time no one has enforced security for years. The gate is cut open, and a clear path surrounded by parked cars leads inside.

The hashtag #graffitipier has more than 14 thousand hits on Instagram. Tik Tok has 206.6 thousand hits for the same hashtag with one minute videos showing the area and how to get there.

Hamilton resident Jaymin Patel said she found the pier after “My cousin and I were just talking and the place came up in one of his stories about a friend.”

Months of covid-19 lockdown has lead to quarantine fatigue and young people have been hustled for holding parties on the beaches and now on college campuses as some schools open. For those who are trying to stay safe and “low risk” the key to live outdoors.

A growing number of young people have taken up a hobby called “Urbex” or Urban Exploration and graffiti pier has provided a perfect outlet. As the title says, it’s all about exploring urban areas. Most of the places found are abandoned or hidden. With its combination of cement structures and arches, Graffiti park feels urban but it also has lots of green space.

This unofficial park is so popular and accepted that the city of Philadelphia has formed plans to make it the first of it’s a kind: A legal, publicly funded, graffiti park.

The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation has signed a deal to with Conrail, which locked up the space back in 1980, to turn it into a legal, greenspace and officially sanctioned art park.

DRWC has commissioned Studio-Zewde to develop the complete concept design. The person in charge of redoing it is Sara Zewde, an urbanist, landscaper, and public artist who also co-founded Studio Zewde.

According to Studio Zewde, “The next evolution of the site will ensure the continuation of the stories, meanings, and cultural production embedded in the site today.”

Other than adding extra safety precautions like making the rooftops more accessible, the park is to remain pretty much the same, a great option for young people to get out, explore, see art, and still stay safely distanced.

Drive in movies at Mercer County Park are a fall hit

By Jules Schott
Senior Reporter

Mercer County Park has been hosting drive-in movie nights every Friday evening since September 4 and they plan to continue. The movies shown are family friendly so community members of all ages attend these events.

In earlier weeks the Park Commission has shown “Harry Potter and The Sorcerer’s Stone” as well as Disney’s “Moana.”

On September 18 they showed the Halloween classic “The Addams Family.”

Lakshmi Sinha, Ritha Reddy, Maya Mahry, Kenya Chatterjee, Ishelly Owani, and Aaleasha Singh who were all at the September 18 showing of “The Addams Family” said, “We had so much fun! We will definitely be back! No matter how far away from the screen you are, you can always relax and play a game of UNO!”

Zoe, Greyson, and Matt Brown said it was their “first time there and a great event.”

The following day the MCP held a live music event, also part of a seasonal line up.

On September 19 two soul groups Kindred Spirits and Sensational Soul Cruisers played on the cricket pitch.

Even though the parking area looked very crowded for the drive-in movie, closer to the screen there was much more space. Movie goers created a variety of seating set-ups. There were people sitting in their trunks, on the roofs of their cars, and out on the grass.

The temperature was chilly so everyone dressed accordingly with jackets and many brought blankets.

The movie is projected onto a large screen that could be seen from the back of the parking area. The sound quality of the movie was great but slowly decreased after the middle section of the allocated parking.

There was security on duty, helping to guide parking and making sure everyone was staying safe. The location was easy to find as there were signs throughout the park.

For more information on live music and movie event in the park visit facebook.com/MercerCountyParkCommission.
The Jersey Fresh Jam, held at the global environmental organization TerraCycle in Trenton and now in its fifteenth year, is the longest running graffiti art event in New Jersey. It is noted for gathering top artists and for creating an atmosphere of camaraderie.

This year’s event took place September 12, 2020 and showcased more than 20 artists from as far away as Australia and Spain as well as from many states including Texas, Vermont, and Pennsylvania, as well as Trenton itself.

During the event, every artist stakes their claim to a section of the exterior walls and sets about transforming a once blank cinder block wall into a piece of art with their own individual style.

The Jam has seen some changes over time but has a throwback to the early 1980s as multiple DJs spin a plethora of hip-hop music throughout the day.

Event organizer and graffiti artist Leon “Rain” Rainbow—a MCCC alumni who has previously been profiled in The VOICE—says of the event, “It’s a celebration of Hip-Hop” where artist can come together and celebrate that influence in their lives.

Spectators watch the artists as they progress from a sketch on the wall to the last drop of paint when the piece is finished. Locals are apt to see all the creativity and appreciate graffiti art up close and personal. The open setting works well for the social distancing precautions needed to handle coronavirus.

Jam DJ known as “It’s Just Ahmad” who has been spinning his turntables for the event since 2010 says, “The graffiti is like hieroglyphics which usually receives a bad reputation.”

The energy Gordon describes can be heard and seen as one navigates through the maze of scaffolding and onlookers with attentive eyes and positive words of reinforcement bouncing back and forth from each artist.

Reese Yarbrough who attended the event as a family gathering with her 12-year-old son and her brother who attends the School of Visual Arts in New York, said she appreciates the “amazing exposure it offers for my son to see creativity in this type of up-close atmosphere and the opportunity for my brother to take some photos he can use to build portfolio.”

Yarbrough added that they don’t miss the event, ever. Photographer Habiyb Shu’ain described the event saying, “Being exposed at a young age has allowed me to see graffiti as art, while some find it difficult to do so.” The photos he takes he says help to improve his craft of photography on an individual level. He shares his work with the Trenton Photo Club.

The careful planning by each graffiti artist that goes into every detail and letter helps dispel stereotypes that people often hold about graffiti as a form of vandalism rather than art.

While once graffiti tags lowered the property values these days there has been a shift. Having sought after artists create graffiti murals on a building can actually increase its value.

By Jason Norton

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By Jason Norton

Reporter
Jersey Fresh Jam and Art All Day splash city with color

By Jason Norton & Micaela Lyons

For eight years Trenton Artworks has hosted Art All Night and its companion event Art All Day, two events that highlight the work of local artists and are free to the public.

This year’s Art All Day was held September 19, 2020 in historic Mill Hill Park, NJ on a bright, end-of-summer afternoon. Despite a cold snap tents and tables sprang up over the course of the day, housing artists while they worked.

Kids contributed sidewalk chalk drawings, a string quartet played, the Trash Parade beating drums and clattering plastic soda bottles went by, and the Trenton Circus Squad performed acrobatics.

Artist Luk Man, whose works feature intricate line work often highlighting images of powerful figures in Black history held up a picture that combined portraits of Martin Luther King Jr, President Barack Obama, and Malcolm X. “I call this one Black Messiahs,” he said.

While the event is free and open to the public, artists hope to sell their pieces.

“I sold last year. I did a piece of Trenton. I did a ghetto part of Trenton...It had a building, and all of these cats running across it, all of the tom cats. A ghetto with clothes hanging in the pathway, and an apartment complex, and somebody actually brought it. I was proud it had even sold.”

Near Man’s stall cruising bicyclists had the streets to themselves participating in the Ciclovia: Open Streets Trenton. Punk music played out of the open doors of a van. Freedom Skate Park, the volunteer organization set up a pop-up skate park on the barricaded streets.

Jake McNichol, founder of the non-profit, partnered with Dogwood Skate Shop, Skate Jawn, and Ciclovia, to showcase “alternative use of the street.”

McNichol said he wishes for the community, “learn the life lesson that skateboarding teaches,” adding “The whole process of skateboarding is based around seeing something in front of you that would be considered an obstacle or something mundane in the city, thinking creatively, and transforming that from something that’s in your way, in your path, turning it into something that’s a venue for creative pursuit.”

South Indian artist and active Trenton community member Srikanth Ranaswany stood on the chalk-patterned wooden planks of a red iron bridge. His record attempt 60 foot long oil painting of a forest scene was fixed to the trusses, spanning the length of the structure.

“I was worried about all of the nature events happening, like the wildfires and deforestation,” Ranaswany said, adding, “I wanted to use one of my powerful mediums, which is art, to kind of bring an awareness to the people around the globe - to preserve the nature for the future generations.”

This year’s event required some public safety adjustments due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and the need for social distancing. There is usually a walking and trolley tour but this year the trolley was left out and walking was the key means of viewing the event.
15 Songs to see you through the rough times

LAURIE’S CORNER

**THE COLLEGE VOICE PLAYLIST**

- **Roar** by Katy Perry
  - Picked by: Laurie Gallagher, Newsroom Director

- **Alive** by Pearl Jam
  - Picked by: Jason Norton, Junior Reporter

- **Somebody Told Me** cover by Molotovs in White
  - Picked by: Ashley Jackson, Junior Reporter

- **Virginia Reel around the Fountain** by Halo Benders
  - Picked by: Micaela Lyons, Junior Reporter

- **My Shot** from Hamilton (Lin Manuel Miranda)
  - Picked by: Alessandro Rivero, Senior Reporter and Photographer

- **You’re Never Fully Dressed Without a Smile** from Annie
  - Picked by: Professor Holly Johnson, Media Co-Adviser

- **Sunday Best** by Surfaces
  - Picked by: Kristina Hontz, Senior Reporter and Artist

- **Run to the Hills** by Iron Maiden
  - Picked by: Ben Levitt, Senior Reporter

- **Wings** by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis
  - Picked by: Elijah Parkman-Williams, Junior Reporter

- **Midnight Sky** by Miley Cyrus
  - Picked by: Jules Schott, Senior Reporter

- **Goodnight Moon**
  - Picked by: Allison Tamasi, Managing Editor

- **Magic in the Hamptons** by Social House
  - Picked by: Serena Bolitho, Junior Reporter

- **Miles Away** by Winger
  - Picked by: Donny Neuls, Editor in Chief

We are all going through a lot during coronavirus and we have to stay at home which can be very stressful. So here are the top 15 songs to help everybody to handle what is going on around us and to lift people’s spirits. Each one was selected by a member of The VOICE staff.

**QUIZ: Where should you virtually travel this fall?**

We may still be in quarantine, but that doesn’t mean we can’t explore. Take the quiz below to find out where you should virtually travel next.

By Ashley Jackson, Reporter

**QUESTIONS**

What are you missing most during quarantine?

A. Fresh air, sunshine, and wide open spaces.
B. Hitting museums and catching concerts.
C. Gathering to eat with friends and family.
D. Sleeping in.

How have you been keeping busy?

A. Soaking up the sun on my patio.
B. Making TikToks and scrolling through Insta.
C. Baking like I’m training for the Great British Bake Off.
D. Working like crazy.

Who’s been keeping you company?

A. My pet. They love getting in some extra walks and playtime.
B. My friends, but virtually. Zoom is life now.
C. My significant other. Cooking dinner together has become our new favorite pastime.
D. My family. Home is where the heart is.

**ANSWERS**

**MOSTLY A’s**

You should travel to the great outdoors—virtually! Take a trip through nature with the National Park Foundation. Their website offers virtual tours of more than 30 different parks.

**MOSTLY B’s**

You should travel to a new museum—virtually! Ditch the crowd and take a virtual tour. Mentalfloss.com has compiled a list of 12 World-Class Museums to start your journey.

**MOSTLY C’s**

You should travel to the coast of Italy—virtually! Take a trip with the youtube channel “Pasta Grannies” as you explore new recipes through old-world cooking traditions for your own kitchen.

**MOSTLY D’s**

You should travel home for a staycation! Quarantine has been tough and you deserve some TLC. Build a blanket fort and camp out to stream your favorite Netflix bingies.
ARE YOU ONE OF US?

Meetings
Every
Monday and
Thursday

12PM-1PM
Room ET127

Join The College VOICE today!

PUZZLES EXTRA

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥️) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥️RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string’s word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

ACROSS
1 Waller or Domino
5 * — not choose to run*
8 Stookie
12 Hardly ruddy
13 Calendar abbr.
14 In due time
15 Noble gas
16 Born
17 Loosen
18 Cowpoke of the pampas
20 Get new actors
22 Car-pool lane abbr.
23 Profit
24 Elevator name
27 Crucial experiment
32 Sea
33 Across
34 Mainsander’s momento
35 Midday party
38 Favorable votes
39 Raw rock
40 Boom times
42 Merry
45 This or that, it matters not
49 Sheltered
50 Possess

DOWN
1 Vampire tomb
2 Cruising
3 Grand
4 Harmonizes
5 Start something new
6 Buck’s mate
8 Tap
9 From birth
10 Affirmative actions
11 Entanglement
12 Word after havoc or gung
13 Finish
14 Night fly
15 Greek cross
16 Guiltless
17 Bill and —
18 Sly sur
19 Glimpse
21 * — the season*
22 * — the sea-son*
23 * — the sea-son*
24 * — the sea-son*
25 * — the sea-son*
26 * — the sea-son*
27 * — the sea-son*
28 * — the sea-son*
29 * — the sea-son*
30 * — the sea-son*
31 * — the sea-son*
32 * — the sea-son*
33 * — the sea-son*
34 * — the sea-son*
35 * — the sea-son*
36 Vinegar bottle
37 Coop denizen
38 Off
39 Life of —
40 Door-frame piece
41 Hodgepodge
42 Remove, as a cap
43 "Les Miserables"
44 Writer
45 Hebrew month
46 Stench
47 Simple card game
48
Can’t get anything done? You’re not the only one

Two ways to help fight the productivity slump

PERSPECTIVES

Donny Neuls

It is hardly a surprise that many of us are facing a productivity slump right now. You should not put yourself down for having the problem but there are ways to push through. Here are two easy ideas to help.

#1 - Create a Plan for Your Day

Once you have woken up for the day, whether you got up straight away or hit snooze seven times, create a list of everything you want to do for the day. This list should include work, chores, and relaxation time.

When writing down the more broad tasks (i.e. clean the kitchen, complete project, etc.), break them up into smaller tasks. As you complete the smaller parts of each task, you will feel more accomplished and motivated.

AN EXAMPLE LIST:
- Complete class project
  - research
  - answer essay questions
- Do shift at job
- Answer work
- Clean kitchen
  - wipe down counters
  - do the dishes
  - clean stove
- Watch episode of “Umbrella Academy” on Netflix
- Video chat with Aaron

TIP: You do not have to complete tasks in the order in which they appear. Complete them as you wish to.

#2 - Avoid the Phone Distraction

For most of us, our homes are not designed to be “work friendly” as we usually have a work or school environment to go to on a daily basis. At home you are likely surrounded by objects and technology that we associate with free time and can become distracting.

One of those technologies is likely your phone: a handy tool or the easiest and worst distraction ever.

Leaving your phone in another room while you’re working will help you in avoiding the urge to use it to check Instagram, text friends, or play a phone game. If you must keep it near you for whatever reason (work, emergencies, etc.), simply turn on the Do Not Disturb setting and keep your phone face down. Better yet, keep the phone behind you somewhere or place an object on top, like a book or a few pieces of paper. This will stop it from making distracting noises and stop you from wanting to pick it up so quickly.

Remember, even if you can’t handle these two suggestions, or if you can only do one, that’s perfectly fine!

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!

PHOTOS OF THE WEEK

“Everyone is working hard, but some students are dummies.”

PHOTOS | ALESSANDRO RIVERO

EDITORIAL CARTOONS

MAIL CALL

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

NOTICE

MCCC LIBRARY
NOW OFFERING CURB SIDE PICK UP
Everyone’s mental health is suffering but MCCC students are bonding

The Attack of the Mental Monsters

Kristina Hontz

Starting this school year feels another chapter in an epic saga that should be titled: The College Experience. It’s a chapter doesn’t feel new. It never seems to end. Spring 2020 started like any other semester, but as each week passed, there were talks of a virus spreading across the globe. The news was particularly worrying for college students who are just stepping into a world, finding their own independence. And then, on March 16, it happened. Every student was sent home and all classes went strictly online.

One student who was a freshman at the time and who asked to remain anonymous said, “the seriousness of the quarantine forcing me to be inside makes me so scared for the future. I can’t help but think about the negative impacts that coronavirus and the quarantine have on not only me, but the global community at large.”

The VOICE surveyed 12 students on their experiences with remote learning. Thirty-three percent said online classes are more stressful than learning in person. Fifty percent said they feel just as stressed regardless of style of learning.

Dr. Heather Jennings, a Psychology professor at MCCC, says of the stress, “It makes sense that this pandemic would have a significant impact on one’s mental health, as our lives have been significantly altered...The uncertainty to this whole situation is likely to cause stress.”

Sophomore student Daniella Haskins says, “Not being allowed to take care of your own personal business is such a hindrance for people who prefer to get things done sooner rather than later can cause such an irritation for persons with exceptional organizational skills.”

As if the generalized stress wasn’t bad enough, it can be accompanied by or triggered clinical anxiety and depression. Financial and educational concerns, fear of future goals, and of course fear of getting sick from covid-19 itself just pile on.

Anxiety and depression, whether formally diagnosed or not, have hit Mercer students just as hard. About 75% of Mercer students say they have faced anxiety or depression during quarantine.

Dr. Jennings says, “Recent research has shown that anxiety and concerns about illness have increased among people across the country, creating a new term called, coronavirusophobia which describes anxiety that relates to COVID-19, contracting the illness, and all the variables associated with living in a COVID-19 pandemic.”

Learning in a college setting used to be fun and enjoyable, able to most students, and each day felt new and exciting. The energy was more inviting and gave students a reason to get up and start the day.

It can seem like there’s no hope in this story of isolation and trying to learn with mental monsters surrounding every corner. However, after so many months of uncertainty and dread, students at Mercer have been able to fight off the negativity and sorrow.

They have been fighting hard to overcome it all with self-care and building support networks.

In the VOICE survey, 50 percent of students said their relationships have been maintained through COVID-19, and 42 percent even said their relationships grew even stronger in these troubling times. Even the most dreadful, dark thoughts and feelings can’t bring Mercer students down. As stressful and draining this adjustment has been, students have been fighting through everyday like superheroes.

As for the other 17 percent of those who may feel like they’re fighting this battle alone, don’t be afraid. Every student, professor, and faculty member is fighting their own mental monsters as well. Find friends, join a club even if it meets through Zoom, keep up with self-care.

No matter how dark the world may seem, there’s always a light around the corner, and even the worst chapters have an end. …

For those interested you can find counseling support at MCCC. Visit mccc.edu/student_services_counseling_personal_resources.shtml

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 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.

How to contact us:
e-mail: kstoch@mccc.edu
phone: (609) 586-4000 ext. 3594
write to: The College VOICE
c/o Prof. Matt Kochis
Mercer County College
1200 Edinburg Rd.
West Windsor, NJ 08560
Dear VOICE, How’s the turtle in the Biology lab doing? Has he been tested for COVID? -The VOICE

Dear Trtlvr, COVID? Has he been tested for COVID? -Trtlvr

Dear VOICE, During Zoom classes, I can’t see anyone and it feels so lonely. Is there anything I can do? -Dear VOICE

Dear VOICE, How do I handle stepping out of frame to grab something when I’m not wearing pants? -No Pants

Dear VOICE, How do I tell my Zoom classmate that I’ve been watching and admiring them every class period? -Hot for Zoomer

Dear Hot for Zoomer, Send them a chocolate scented N95 mask with a love note attached. -The VOICE

Dear VOICE, Quick, I need a good pandemic pickup line! -Asking for a Friend

Dear Asking for a Friend, “You’re so hot you’re giving me a fever.” -The VOICE

Dear VOICE, How’s the turtle in the Biology lab doing? -Broad Interests

Dear Broad Interests, We’ve heard Pets Plus is starting a new interactive dating site for all creatures. Whether you’re into homo sapiens or felis catus [Shane Dawson], there is an exotic experience for everyone. -The VOICE

Dear VOICE, This Halloween season will bring special joy. Take part of all the hayrides, pumpkin carving and apple picking you can! -Capricorn

Dear Capricorn, Oct. 22 - Nov. 21 Everyone else may be feeling exhausted by the pandemic but you are finding your second wind. Take advantage of the quarantine to tackle things you left behind in the past.

Dear VOICE, What is the best online dating app during the pandemic? I have tried Tinder and Bumble but something when I’m not in frame to grab something when I’m not wearing pants! -No Pants

Dear VOICE, Of course you miss your regular routine to stay engaged. This Halloween season can make you different paces, be patient with yourself.

Dear VOICE, It’s pumpkin spice time. Remember to treat yourself to something pumpkin-flavored for all your hard work. You deserve it, Cancer! -Cancer

Dear Cancer, Jul. 21 - Jul. 22 It’s pumpkin spice time. Remember to treat yourself to something pumpkin-flavored for all your hard work. You deserve it, Cancer! -Cancer

Dear VOICE, Don’t be nervous to speak up during class! Remember Aries, be confident in your school assignments, you work hard enough.

Dear VOICE, Back to school is exciting for a dedicated worker like you, Aquarius. Now that you are settled into your new work schedule, it’s time to relax and enjoy the fall. -Virgo

Dear Virgo, Aug. 23 - Sept. 22 Libra season falls over into October. Coming to the end of your sign’s season can make you tired. Try to switch up your regular routine to stay engaged.

Dear VOICE, Remember Pisces, this season can make you overwhelmed. Try meditation and alone-time to keep you relaxed. -Sagittarius

Dear Sagittarius, Nov. 22 - Dec. 21 Everyone else may be feeling exhausted by the pandemic but you are finding your second wind. Take advantage of the quarantine to tackle things you left behind in the past.

Dear VOICE, New friendships from the new classes are in your future, even though you’re studying online. Have fun, expand your community, and still make time to get your work done. -Leo

Dear Leo, Jul. 23 - Aug. 22

Dear VOICE, Your workload may be extra stressful, but keep going, you’re doing well! -Libra

Dear Libra, Sept. 23 - Oct. 22 Libra season falls over into October. Coming to the end of your sign’s season can make you tired. Try to switch up your regular routine to stay engaged.

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