

THE COLLEGE VOICE

Mercer County Community College's student-run newspaper Since 1969

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Friday, April 21st, 2006

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Tuition Hikes Likely Next Fall Semester

By Emelyne Smith
News Editor

Students at Mercer County Community College appear likely to pay 10 percent more for tuition next fall as reduced state funding is expected to take its toll.

New Jersey Governor John Corzine has proposed unprecedented cuts to aid for higher education in one of several efforts to close the state's \$4.5 billion budget gap.

Corzine's proposed cuts to higher education amount to \$169 million, leaving around \$1.9 billion for college funding. State funding for public colleges like MCCC would be slashed by 10 percent.

"Since we can't meet expenses next year from the state, we must turn to the county, and then to tuition," Acting President Thomas Wilfrid said.

Wilfrid suggested that tuition would have to rise by \$9 per credit hour to make up for the state funding cuts. Student fees could also be boosted. If Mercer County officials can boost aid to fill the breach, Wilfrid said, tuition hikes could be held below that figure.

Discussions are underway between college and county officials to determine what position the county is in to allot additional aid to MCCC.

"We know that the county doesn't want us to suffer," Wilfrid said.

Wilfrid also suggested that MCCC's declining share of total New Jersey community college enrollment may lead to cuts slightly greater than the state's proposed 10 percent.

Last year, MCCC received around \$9.5 million from a total \$163 million allotted for New Jersey community col-

leges. Aid amounts are determined based on statewide enrollment rates, and the proportions of credit student enrollment relative to county size.

MCCC receives approximately 25 percent of its income from the county, 20 percent from the state, and half from tuition and fees. A small amount of revenue is also generated each year by the school's conference center and rental fees of campus space.

For many students, the effects of higher tuition could be offset by Corzine's proposed increase in state financial aid. Among other aid sources, the Tuition Aid Grant program would receive more state funds.

The students who will be hardest hit by steeper tuitions, Wilfrid said, are those who cannot afford higher prices but do not qual-

Con't TUITION, P3

Feature: Pac-Mania!



Photo by Paul Plumeri
Members of the JAM Club get ready to host a live-action Pac-Man game. Ponchos signified their assigned character - one of the ghosts, or Pac-Man himself.

By Paul Plumeri
A&E Editor

The rays of the noon sun fell ominously upon the crowded courtyard of Mercer County Community College's West Windsor campus on the great day of March 30, 2006.

Many students stood locked in casual conversation, oblivious of what was about to occur.

The air stood still, as if the very earth gasped in anticipation of the momentous event that was upon us all.

And then it happened. Five full-grown adults emerged from the doors of the Student Center wearing flamboyantly colored ponchos with felt googly eyes glued on, walkie-talkies hanging ornately from their necks.

I was not a mere witness to this fantastic spectacle. I was one of these elite, these five champions of mankind. For 15 minutes of glory, I would be known not as Paul, but as Inky, the Blue Ghost.

That's right; this was live action Pac-Man.

As we began to hit our stride toward the center of the courtyard, we heard many murmurs and saw confused glares from the surrounding student body.

Someone said, "Look at these goofy ass-crackers!" followed by a short fit of laughter.

"Jealously, pure jealousy," I thought, keeping my head high. "I'm chock-full of

integrity, of which they clearly have no concept."

I turned quickly to shoot a confident stare to the crowd when I caught sight of my reflection in a window. It was then that I realized how foolish I looked and how I was begging for ridicule.

How did I end up in this situation, you might wonder? To answer that question, one must first ask how this video-game-sprung-to-life came to be.

"We wanted to show people that we are more than just a bunch of nerds sitting in a dark room watching movies," said Kate Skalka, secretary and "den mother" of the Japanese Anime and Manga (JAM) club, which hosted the event.

"I read on the Internet about a live Pac-Man event run by New York University called Pacmanhattan," Skalka said. "I wondered, why not bring this to the Mercer campus?"

Being the visionaries they are, the JAM club then constructed a blueprint of how the game would be played.

"Running through each path of the campus would earn the Pac-Man points," Liam Surry, JAM president, explained. "The goal would be for Pac-Man to collect as many points as possible without being touched by the ghosts."

Similar to the real game, Surry said, "At the four corners of the campus stood

Con't PAC-MANIA, P3

MCCC Student Charged with Campus Car Break-In

By Maria Koehler
Staff Writer

West Windsor police arrested a full-time Mercer County Community College student last month for burglarizing a car in the college's east parking lot, police said.

Edward A. Days, a Trenton resident, allegedly used a master key to unlock a 1996 blue Honda Civic belonging to the mother of another Mercer student between 11 a.m. and noon on March 23, said Patrick McCormick, detective sergeant with the West Windsor Police Department.

Days allegedly took \$2,750 worth of equipment and compact discs from the car, McCormick said. The car's exterior received minimal damage.

A student witness report-

ed the perpetrator's license plate number to West Windsor police. The police, who did not have an available officer to come to campus immediately, then called MCCC, said Arnie Marx, the college's security supervisor.

The witness's vehicle description prompted patrolmen Pete Hanne to stop Days later that afternoon when he was giving his girlfriend a ride back to the West Windsor campus, Marx said. Hanne found the stolen equipment in the car's back seat, Marx said.

Police arrested Days and charged him with receiving stolen property, burglary, theft and criminal mischief, McCormick said.

If Days is convicted, he will face student discipline. If he has a police record, he could go to jail, while other-

wise he might pay fines, McCormick said.

The Honda's driver, who requested anonymity, said the theft left him "very disappointed and devastated."

Mike Dill, head of facilities, said that special MCCC patrols in golf carts routinely check the parking lots, but "you can't cover every inch all the time." The West Windsor police drive by periodically to check the campus lots as well, he said.

The Honda had been parked in the back quarter of East Lot 2, close to the road and greenhouse, Marx said. A group of students with customized cars parks in the same area, Dill said, adding that he believes Days may have cased the car in advance.

Dill warned students and

Con't BREAK-IN, P2

College News

News from the Mercer County Community College Campus

Mercer Moves Ahead with 14-Week Semester Schedule

By Arthur Iurilli
Staff Writer

Despite a divided faculty, Mercer County Community College administrators are moving ahead with plans to shorten semesters from 16 to 14 weeks by the fall of 2007.

In a disputed vote, the Faculty Forum on Teaching and Learning on March 30 passed a resolution advising the administration to implement a 14-week semester schedule, including a finals week.

The forum passed the resolution 14-13, with a late-arriving member and committee Chair Amy Vondrak casting the deciding votes in favor. Vondrak later noted that the vote was only "advisory, not decisive," and that administrators could do what they want regardless.

Earlier last month the forum had voted overwhelmingly to approve a 15-week semester by 2007. That schedule would eliminate the

existing finals week, which occurs after 15 weeks of classes.

Administrators including Mark McCormick, vice president of academic and student affairs, have pursued plans for a 14-week semester, in part to create a brief January "intersession."

About a dozen of New Jersey's 19 public community colleges have created or are creating similar two- to four-week sessions, which can raise funds in tight budget times and improve student retention, McCormick said.

"I would say that 'goal' remains a good word" to describe implementing the 14-week plan by 2007, McCormick said. "There are workload implications for a shortened year that we need to work out."

McCormick said he wants to set up a faculty group to analyze concerns and solve potential problems. He agreed the disputed FCTL vote was not decisive.

"It's clear we're a divided community, and there's no consensus either way," McCormick said. "That would be true if the vote had been 14-12 the other way. So we want to take time to look harder and bring to the table all possible ramifications."

Total class time would remain the same under the 14-week plan, as courses would have 10 minutes added to each classroom hour.

Some faculty members object that the schedule will lengthen class times – including night courses that meet once a week for as long as four hours – beyond reason. Others say they cannot reasonably cram in course material into the shortened schedule. Some programs in which students must meet state licensing exams, such as nursing or funeral services, may have to stay on existing schedules.

Professor Cavit Cooley of

Con't SEMESTER, P4

Mercer To Offer CSI-like Science Course

By William Carr
Staff Writer

It's not exactly "CSI," but this fall, Mercer County Community College will begin offering students an alternative to standard science courses that will feature forensics investigation.

The course, entitled Chemical Science Concepts (CHE 106), aims to teach the fundamentals of biology and chemistry using real-life techniques like those used on the popular CBS crime drama.

"The attraction of the course is that it is current, exciting, and relevant," said chemistry Professor Helen Tanzini. Tanzini, along with biology Professor Laura Blinderman, has developed and will teach the class.

The course will be based around solving mysteries, with forensics evidence playing a large part in the course,

Blinderman said. Students will examine such evidence as blood samples, powder evidence and hair samples to come up with a solution to a mystery.

The course will be taught in a step-by-step process similar to that which forensic scientists use to examine crime scenes, Blinderman said.

Students will work in groups, and the class will consist of labs and lectures that examine real-life criminal cases, including the O.J. Simpson case and the John F. Kennedy assassination. Students will also have the opportunity to create their own crime scene scenarios.

In addition, the class will take a trip to the New Jersey State Crime Lab. Popularity is anticipated to be high, so students are recommended to register early to secure a spot.

Hiring of Contract Negotiator Troubles Faculty Members

By Scott Schendlinger
Staff Writer

With five employee labor contracts set to expire on June 30, including the faculty's, Mercer County Community College has hired an outside negotiator to work with union leaders on new contract terms.

The hiring of an outside party, labor consultant Dr. James Reilly, to negotiate the contracts is an unprecedented move by the college and troubles some faculty members.

Professor Robert Pugh, president of the MCCC Faculty Association, said he felt "surprised and upset" by the news of Reilly's hiring. The consultant will be paid \$65 an hour, and Pugh said that Acting President Thomas Wilfrid could have made the effort to negotiate before bringing in an outsider.

Wilfrid and Eric Perkins, former vice president for administration, handled the negotiations when the faculty's previous contract expired three years ago. But Wilfrid's position prevents him from performing the duty again, the president said.

Instead, Reilly has been hired to represent the college

board of trustees at the bargaining table for all five contracts. Wilfrid said there will be nothing new about the process. He described Reilly, who has been hired on a part-time basis, as "well-qualified."

The foremost goal of the negotiation process is speed and fairness, Wilfrid said.

"I anticipate little difficulty in finding an agreement," Wilfrid said, adding that he believes that the college and faculty "need to find a fair settlement for both the stakeholders and the workers."

Pugh said that his main goal is a fair contract.

"The key word is fair. As long as it is fair for both parties, everyone should be happy," said Pugh, acknowledging that New Jersey's current budget crisis might have an impact on negotiations.

The chief negotiator for every faculty contract since 1978 has been Arthur Schwartz, a math professor. Schwartz said that although MCCC may be one of the best community colleges in the country, only faculty members at the lowest rank, known as instructors, are in the top-ten salary bracket among New Jersey two-year colleges.

Schwartz said his goal is to secure a contract the faculty deserves, which he believes includes higher pay. However, because of the school's recently-announced \$1.5 million budget deficit, Schwartz acknowledges that higher pay may not be an option.

"I never ask for what we do not deserve, or what they cannot pay," Schwartz said.

Though threat of a strike looms over most labor negotiations, Wilfrid and Schwartz said they anticipate no such drama. Schwartz said worries of a strike may be present amongst his colleagues because this year marks the 20th anniversary of the last MCCC faculty strike.

"I don't know any good faculty that wants a strike," he said.

Wilfrid echoed this sentiment, saying that relations between the union and the board are mature, making a strike unlikely.

Although faculty contracts expire June 30, no deadline exists for new contracts to be signed. Negotiations will commence after the faculty union makes its requests to board representatives.

Student Handbook Under Renovation

By Peter J. Fesmire
Staff Writer

Mercer County Community College's student handbook is undergoing a renovation this semester to more clearly define college policies.

"The old handbook seems to be confusing for students," said Professor Craig Coenen, chairman of the Academic Integrity Committee. "We are working to streamline the new version for easier understanding."

The revisions will include clarification of grade appeals procedures, academic integrity violation procedures, the role of student advocates and student rights and responsibilities.

The effort is also aimed at helping faculty understand the procedures for handling an academic integrity violation. The revision would

allow faculty to more easily deal with policy violations and lighten their load, Coenen said.

"What we are doing is to insure that students and faculty are not wasting their time" dealing with academic integrity violations, the history professor said.

Last fall Coenen's committee handled 45 cases, either alleged plagiarism or students appealing their grades. Another 16 cases have been filed so far this semester.

Coenen said the revised handbook will be more organized in an attempt to alleviate confusion. It more clearly defines grade appeal procedures, for instance, right down to where students can retrieve the appeal form.

The Faculty Forum met March 31 to discuss the proposed changes but postponed a formal vote to ratify the revision until April 27.

BREAK-IN Con't from P1

staff to use caution when parking, saying that on occasion, "People are in such a rush, they forget to close their doors." Marx said many students leave cameras, headsets, CDs and CD players on their seats.

mccc
voice@
gmail.com

Features

The Highlights of Mercer County Community College

Peers Consider Tennis Coach 'A Legend'

By Esther Mills
Managing Editor

Stanley Dlugosz, Mercer County Community College men's tennis coach, is considered legendary by his peers for good reason.

"When I say he is a legend, I am not kidding," said John Wagner, assistant athletic director, of the long-time Mercer soccer coach and pro soccer player.

At 68, Dlugosz still plays competitive senior tennis nationally. But competition for Dlugosz does not stop with his peer group.

"I play and hit with all my players," he said. "I can't beat my first four this year."

After 40 years as a full-time professor of civil engineering, Dlugosz retired from Mercer in 2000. But retirement doesn't mean the same to Dlugosz as it does to others. When administrators asked him to continue teaching with reduced hours, he accepted.

It could appear that Dlugosz is all work and no play, but the terms seem to be synonymous to him.

At Olney High School in Philadelphia in the 1950s, Dlugosz played basketball, soccer and baseball and was All-Public League and a team captain for two seasons. He was considered the top player in the Metro-Philadelphia area and won the Alfred Otto Award.

His achievements earned him an athletic scholarship in soccer and baseball to Drexel University. He became a two-time All-American and a three-time All-Middle Atlantic Conference pick, and he helped Drexel to the NCAA tournament.

Upon graduation in 1960, Dlugosz had a slew of job offers and decided to take a job at what was then Trenton Junior College. Since then – and through its name change to MCCC in 1966 – the college has given Dlugosz a platform for his love of sports.

He started the soccer program in

1962, and from 1963 to 1982 his teams were regional champs 12 times. The Vikings won six straight Garden State Athletic Conference titles from 1968 to 1973. He was Region XIX coach of the year six times between 1968 and 1974, and he won the New Jersey Sportswriter Coach of the Year in 1968.

In all, Dlugosz compiled a 183-28-3 record during his 20-year soccer coaching career, a mark that Wagner said speaks for itself. In 1992 he was inducted into the National Junior College Soccer Coaches Hall of Fame.

But his success in the soccer world wasn't limited to coaching.

Dlugosz played professionally in the United League of Philadelphia, where he helped VE Erzgebirge win five league titles in seven years, including four straight from 1967-70. He toured in 1964 with a United League all-star team in Germany, France and Switzerland. He also played professionally with the Philadelphia Ukrainian Nationals for three years and helped the team win the U.S. Open Challenge Cup in 1960 and '61.

"Soccer took me all over the world," Dlugosz said. But he added that his heart has always been in teaching and coaching.

After receiving his masters degree in engineering at Lehigh University in 1962, Dlugosz was faced with the decision to get a doctorate or a professional engineering license. He decided the license would be more practical because it would allow him to demonstrate actual engineering applications to his students.

Of all of his accomplishments, Dlugosz said his teaching days at Mercer are what he values most.

"My biggest accomplishment is being able to teach," he said. "I really love it. As long as I like it and my kids are happy with my accomplishments, I am never going to stop."

"I thought it was dead corny," said student Pricilla Miccio as she did her homework. "I felt bad for the people running around like idiots."

Others were confused.

Seeing the ponchos, student Molly Ahearn wondered, "Is it about to rain? Do they know something I don't? Are they meteorologists?"

None of this bothered student John Hamon, who participated in all three of the day's matches.

"I did one as Pac-Man, one as a ghost, and another as a Pac-monitor, so I am exhausted," he said. "But it was definitely a lot of fun."

This reporter, a heavy smoker for six years, can attest to the exhaustion. The campus doesn't seem large until you find yourself

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ANSWERS

To LAST ISSUE'S 'FUN & GAMES'

Word Scrambler Solution:

NAPOLEON BONEPARTE

Yogi-ism Solution:

a = i, d = s, f = d, g = a, h = y, i = v, k = h, p = r, q = e, s = n, t = l, w = t, y = g, z = i (mistake- two i substitutes were included)

Pop Quiz Answer:

Buzz Aldrin, "The eagle has landed."



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PAC-MANIA Con't from P1

cones signifying dots of invincibility for Pac-Man. We wanted to tie bandanas around trees to represent the bonus-point fruits from the game, but they kept getting stolen."

While the event was planned in the spirit of fun and designed to inspire participation, some students didn't see the appeal.

Foundation is a growing source of scholarships for students with financial needs.

Despite the extra cost to students, the hikes will be needed to keep academic standards high, Wilfrid said.

"It's worth it to raise

tuition in order to keep the college vital at a time when the state faces a budget crisis," said Wilfrid. "When you look at the cost of tuition at Mercer, it's a great bargain compared to the potential value of a college education."

The tuition increase and

sprinting from end to end, trying to tackle someone in a yellow poncho adorned with felt eyes.

Despite the detractors, the event went off without a hitch, so much so that the JAM club intends to make it

a monthly event during the spring and fall semesters, granting good weather.

Until then, make sure to kick your smoking habit and start running two miles a day.

TUITION Con't from P1

ify for financial aid. Wilfrid said that he and school officials are currently meeting to discuss how to best serve students in this category, adding that the MCCC

ing cuts in the state's final budget, which under the New Jersey constitution is to be implemented by June 30. The New Jersey Council of Community Colleges is lobbying lawmakers to lighten the impact on New Jersey's two-year schools.

Sports

Covering the Vikings of Mercer County Community College

Mercer Baseball Struggling to Improve

By Chris McGloin
Staff Writer

The Mercer Vikings baseball team has endured a tough run in league play after returning from spring break with high expectations following a successful non-conference schedule.

Mercer ended an 8-game losing streak on April 12 by defeating The College of New Jersey's junior varsity squad, 12-10. It then got back to winning league games by sweeping a doubleheader Saturday against City College of Morris, 9-2 and 7-4.

That left the Vikings with a 16-17 overall record, including a disappointing 5-10 in league play. That's a big improvement over last year, when the team won just 14 games.

After two disappointing seasons, first-year coach Matt Wolski wants the team to believe it can not only compete in its league but for national championships as well.

These high expectations are borne from a non-conference loss earlier this year in which the Vikings lost a heartbreaker to Gloucester County College, the defend-

ing Division II national champions, by a score of 5-4 after leading 3-2 in the 8th inning.

"That game helped us to learn that we can play with anyone," Wolski said. "It's just a matter of continuing to improve our fundamentals so that this team can get back to where it was three years ago."

That was the last time the Vikings made it into the Division II College World Series. Wolski said the Vikings maintain hopes of upending two-time defending league champs Brookdale County Community College and getting back into being a perennial contender for the Division II championship.

Unfortunately, the Vikings are entering the home stretch of the season trying to emerge from a slump.

Despite scoring 8 runs against Camden County College on April 3rd, the Vikings lost by a score of 10-8. On April 6 Brookdale steamrolled the Vikings by a score of 15-1. Home losses to Camden (5-4) on April 10 and Salem (4-1) on April 11 followed.

The team's offense is led by Dan Mattonelli, a sophomore transfer leadoff hitter. After the Brookdale game he was batting .481 with 23 runs batted in after a 81 at-bats.

The Vikings have five players batting over .300, though they don't pack much slugging power with only four home runs through the first 28 games. The team makes up for this deficit with excellent team speed and a knack for manufacturing runs by playing small ball.

Mattonelli said some players are still adjusting to college baseball.

"We have a lot of new guys and freshmen on the team who are fresh out of high school, where they were able to get away with going for home runs on every pitch," Mattonelli said, adding that they have to adapt to a less aggressive approach.

According to Wolski, the only thing keeping the Vikings from being a championship-caliber team is a lack of experience on the defensive side of the ball. Almost half the team, including two of the three starting pitchers, are freshmen.

But Mattonelli said the team has a successful offense.

"Hitting is contagious. One hit can easily lead to two or three or more all in a row. We all have a very clear-headed, care-free attitude at the plate that really rubs off on everyone else," he said.

When the Vikings find themselves in low-scoring

defensive struggles, their surprisingly effective pitching staff is often up to the challenge but can have problems winning close games.

Despite the shortcomings, Wolski believes that the team's obsessive work ethic and high level of team chemistry are the beginnings of long-term success.

"Our guys treat baseball as a lifestyle, but they also spend a lot of time together away from the game as well," the coach said. "We're hoping that the program will be such that is not only a success, but fun to be a part of."

SEMESTER Con't from P2

the criminal justice department said he is concerned that students might lose time traditionally allotted for student activities. Many clubs meet between noon and 1:30 p.m., a period that could be affected if class schedules change.

The manner of the FCTL vote on the 14-week proposal raised hackles. An initial tally of the closed ballot showed 13 votes against and 12 in favor. Then a late-arriving member was permitted to verbally cast a 13th vote in favor. Vondrak then broke the tie by casting a vote in favor.

John Santosuosso, coordinator of engineering technology, said he was troubled both by the proposed schedule change and the FCTL vote.

Roberts Rules of Order, the established system for running a parliamentary-style body, states, "The chairman should always vote in case of a ballot. Should [s]he fail to do so before the polls are closed [s]he cannot then do it without the permission of the assembly." Santosuosso noted that polls are considered closed after all ballots have been cast but before any have been tallied, meaning the FCTL vote might be invalid.

McCormick praised faculty members for conducting "principled, collegial discussions without finger-pointing."

No matter the final solution, the traditional 15-week semester with an additional week for finals will continue through the 2006-2007 academic year.

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PG-13
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Come talk to us! Based on your interests and abilities, we always welcome more help with editing, production, design and leadership. Come help us serve the community.

The College Voice MCCC, Room SC218 1200 Old Trenton Rd., West Windsor, NJ, 08550 (609) 586-4800, ext. 3405 mcccvoice@gmail.com

THE COLLEGE VOICE

Mercer County Community College's student-run newspaper Since 1969

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mcccvoice@gmail.com