MERGER’S SECURITY PROBLEMS
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SPECIAL FEATURE:
Though highly popular at MCCC home tattoos may be bad for your health | PGS. 4-5

How much do adjunct professors affect student outcomes? PG. 7

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A professor’s sudden absence takes college by surprise

By Kristie Kuschyk
Senior Reporter

A professor’s sudden absence takes college by surprise

Catherine Wherry of West Wind sor Township, remembers anticipating the day that her college acceptance letter would come in the mail. Wherry felt if she got into her first choice school, Moravian College, then all of the hard work and late night study sessions of high school would have been worth it. She says she remembers feeling like if she got into her school, “Everything would fall into place...it would be perfect.”

Fortunately, Wherry got the letter she wanted. As the days of summer passed she bought a microwave and mini-fridge, and soon was moving them into her new dorm room. But a little over a year later Wherry was back home. The college experience was totally different from what she thought it would be, moreover, it was financially draining.

Along with the financial issues, Wherry faced issue at home that made her feel she needed to leave Moravian.

“I do not wish to go into detail about my home situation but...your home life can take a toll on a student.” Wherry said. Ultimately she decided to finish out the year at her local community college.

What Wherry did is common among students who go away to college straight from high school. According to Scholarships.com what Wherry did is commonly known as a “reverse transfer.” Scholarships.com was created in 1999 to help high school counselors, college admissions officers and perspective or current college students find

事实证明，许多学生选择学校的原因是错误的，比如和朋友在一起，或者有显著的区别来自高中学校或者选择一个特别的国家但是大学和但是在学校中并不是发展的学校。“Wherry said, “We didn’t have a clue, really what was going on...we only heard rumors.”

Dr. Coenen explained that when they realized something was wrong, he and the rest of the Social Sciences Departmental Personnel Committee (DPC) sent a letter to Vice President Gen. Generals requesting information on Dr. Walker’s teaching status for the semester. Vice President Generals responded that the matter was never brought to the attention of the Vice President.

See WALKER page 16

Students who transfer from four-year to two-year colleges face graduation obstacles

By Dan Povic and Stefan Harnson
Senior Reporter

Mercer professor Dr. Renee Walker, appears to have stopped teaching her classes several weeks into the fall semester. Although the online catalog indicates she is teaching a regular course load for Fall 2012, her students say they have not seen her in weeks and that substitutes are now covering her classes.

“She didn’t give us any warning,” said Shannon Kenny, a second year Liberal Arts major who was enrolled in Dr. Renee Walker’s Sociology 101 class at the start of the semester. “It was the last class before the left when she told us she was leaving.”

Kenny said that the SOC 101 class was without a substitute for any sort of two classes. The next week, an adjunct professor, Prof. Patrick McNicholas stepped in to teach the class. Some of the adjunct professors have made statements with the VOICE on the subject.

Kenny said that Prof. Walker told the class that she was leaving to do “research” for the Obama campaign. A large campaign poster is attached to Walker’s office door in LA 110.

In an interview with The VOICE, Mercer’s president, Dr. Patricia Donohue, said Walker was not on a sanctioned leave by the college.

The VOICE made numerous attempts to contact Dr. Walker for comment over the course of two weeks, but did not receive any response.

Regarding Dr. Walker’s sudden absence, Dr. Craig Coenen, Chair of the Social Sciences department in which Dr. Walker is housed, said “We didn’t have a clue, really what was going on...we only heard rumors.”

Dr. Coenen explained that when they realized something was wrong, he and the rest of the Social Sciences Departmental Personnel Committee (DPC) sent a letter to Vice President Gen. Generals requesting information on Dr. Walker’s teaching status for the semester. Vice President Generals responded that the matter was never brought to the attention of the Vice President.

The survey found that 14.4 percent of first-time students who started at a four-year institution ultimately ended up reverse transferring. Of those who reverse transferred, 16 percent eventually went back to the school where they started, and 28 percent transferred to a different four-year college eventually, but fully 55 percent never went back to a four-year.

The longer reverse transfers stayed at their two-year college, the less likely they were to ever return to any four-year college. The study examined the six year out-comes of the reverse transfers and found: “Two-thirds of all reverse transfer students neither had a credential from nor were still enrolled at a four-year institution. However, one-third of reverse transfer students in the fall 2005 four-year beginning cohort either completed or were still enrolled at a two-year institution at the end of the study period. While conventional retention studies would categorize them as non-persisters, this result nevertheless shows that these students continued their postsecondary career and earned credentials in the two-year sector.”

The study differentiated students who took a few classes at community colleges over the summer, but did not withdraw from their four year institution; these students generally did well and accelerated their graduation, thus saving money.

As for those who start full-time at a two-year college, they certainly save money, but their chances of transferring to a four-year college in two or even three years are very low. According to Mercer’s most recent Institutional Profile data (from the college’s 2010 report which can be found on the New Jersey State Higher Education governmental website) only 5.2 percent of first-time, full-time enrollment students graduate in 2 years. For those that stay at Mercer for three years, only 12.8 percent graduate, while 19.2 percent transfer. The graduation and transfer rates are highest for white and Asian students, and lowest for African American and Hispanic students who make up 35 percent of the overall student body.

When Wherry was asked what her advice for students starting out at four-year colleges she said, “Going away to college can be scary yet exciting, but don’t take it for granted.”

A growing number of students are transferring from four to two year colleges.

Higher education funding and it is associated with The National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA) and The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC).

Reverse transferring, according to Scholarships.com, is what happens when students who attend a four-year school for a short while decide to transfer to a two-year or community college.

There are several factors that Scholarships.com suggests may cause a student to reverse transfer. The most common reason given are the financial burdens associated with a four-year program. Another top reason cited by Scholarships.com is the fact that many students choose schools for the wrong reasons, such as staying with friends or significant others from high school or choosing a particular part of the country but winding up at a school that doesn’t have the program the student is interested in. A study by The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center shows the ways in which reverse transferring can affect degree completion. According to the Clearinghouse complete report published in 2012, “The data for this report were drawn from the Student Tracker SM and DegreeVerify SM services, administered by the National Student Clearinghouse, which tracks 93 percent of college enrollments across all postsecondary institutions nationwide, including all institution types…”

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Handicap access at Mercer: is there a problem?

By Noelle Gilman & Stephen Harrison
Senior Reporters

In 1990, Congress passed the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as to integrate them into society. State and local government agencies, which include public colleges like Mercer, are required to provide access to their facilities so that they do not discriminate against individuals with physical or mental impairments according to Title II of the law.

The guidelines for meeting ADA standards are much less strict for facilities constructed prior to 1992 when the ADA laws went into full effect. According to the ADA, any barriers that prevent access for people with disabilities in older buildings must be removed, but the building does not need to adhere to all of the regulations in the ADA unless major renovations are undertaken.

"By law we reach the minimum of the code," says Debra Stotland, the executive assistant to the Dean of Liberal Arts for six years. For the past five years she has used a motorized chair to avoid pain caused by Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, an inherited disorder she has that is characterized by progressive muscle loss and spasms that often result in immobility.

Does Mercer in fact reach the ADA code minimum requirements? The VOICE set out to find out, testing and retesting every door button, elevator and access point on the West Windsor campus. The results were mixed.

Some of the automatic door buttons failed to operate properly. These included the buttons for exterior doors to the Business (BS) building and the Engineering and Technology (ET) building and a particularly temperamental door to the Fine Arts (FA) building, which one day worked, but the next failed to operate entirely despite repeated attempts. VOICE reporters confirmed with security that the FA door was turned on during each attempt to access the building.

Another problematic access issue on the West Windsor campus is that no handicapped buttons are installed at the entrances of the financial aid office, bursars or bookstore, several of the most frequented locations on campus and part of the newly built -- thus required to be fully ADA compliant -- Student Success Center.

The doors for these locations are usually propped open to provide access, but during a random inspections The VOICE frequently found the doors to financial aid shut.

Elevators are another concern. On September 4, faculty and staff were alerted via email that the elevator within the Math and Science (MS) building would be out of order until the end of September. The elevator was down for most of August as well, forcing disabled students in summer and fall classes to devise complex and time-consuming new routes to get to their classes.

Another problem is that the second floor of the Communications (CM) Building houses the Mercer Art Gallery which is supposed to welcome the public throughout the day, but there is no elevator in the CM building.

"Because the CM building doesn't have an elevator... people have to come through the LA building to see an exhibit. If you aren't familiar with Mercer, you won't know to do that," Stotland told The VOICE.

Broken door switches, downed or non-existent elevators, and closed doors to the student services offices -- while likely not pushing Mercer into actual non-compliance with the ADA policies-- pose significant access problems for the community.

On October 5, the Alliance Center for Independence hosted its annual New Jersey Disability Pride Parade in Trenton. According to ACI its central mission and the goal of the parade is to promote independent living for people with disabilities. Independence is central to the disability rights movement.

Although many of the core campus buildings are linked by enclosed second-floor walkways, and the various areas of campus can usually be accessed through one route or another, the reality is that disabled persons on campus cannot reasonably remain autonomous; in order to get around efficiently they must rely on others for assistance.

Diagnosed with spina bifida, third-year Liberal Arts major Danny Wheeler uses a wheelchair and his service dog, Buck, to get around campus. Wheeler told The VOICE, "If the buttons don't work I just ask a janitor or security officer nearby [for help]."

Marge Archer, the Liberal Arts student advocate, is still on crutches in September though she broke her ankle tripping over an obstacle in a Mercer classroom while teaching a summer class.
How safe is your home tattoo?

Kierra Slate, a second year Physical Therapist Assistant student at Mercer, received her home tattoos from her friend, Keith, who has been diagnosed with Hepatitis C. In his interview with the VOICE, Carl admitted to being well acquainted with the risk factors for the spread of infectious disease is not exactly a revelation.

According to the website of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Hepatitis C infects more Americans than any other infectious disease, with around 3.2 million current cases. New research is suggesting a possible link between Hepatitis C and home tattooing, a practise that is particularly common among Mercer students.

A recent VOICE survey of 35 randomly selected Mercer students found that 1 in 5 students had at least one tattoo done by someone without a license. Carl, (not his real name), a sophomore at Mercer who requested to remain anonymous, has four tattoos. Two are iconic Grateful Dead images, and the other two are stencils copying the designs of famed British graffiti artist, Banksy. One of them he refers to as a “kitchen table tattoo,” because that’s where he received it—at an un-sterile kitchen table. “One of my friends told me that his friend had acquired a tattoo gun and was playing around with it,” he says.

Carl told the VOICE in a phone interview. He continued, “I waited to see the tattoo that he had given my friend. The work looked pretty good when it was fresh, so I decided to get one myself.” According to Shadia Bel Hamdounia, Youth Hepatitis C Coordinator for The Philadelphia Board of Public Health, Carl is lucky. Bel Hamdounia is leading a surveillance program in Philadelphia aimed at determining risk factors for the transmission of Hepatitis C with an eye toward prevention. “Compared to the general population [in Philadelphia],

Kierra Slate, a second year Physical Therapist Assistant student at Mercer, received her home tattoos from her friend, Keith, who has been diagnosed with Hepatitis C. In his interview with the VOICE, Carl admitted to being well acquainted with the risk factors for the spread of infectious diseases such as Hepatitis C, because up until a year and a half ago, he was in and out of rehab for using heroin intravenously. He says that, during his time as a drug user, he would visit Philadelphia and the surrounding areas daily, “only for drugs.”

Knowledge of intravenous drug use was useful to Carl because it prompted him to take some precautions when he received his non-professional tattoo. Two years ago, researchers from The University of British Columbia, along with The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, published a meta-analysis of 124 studies regarding tattoos and hepatitis C in the International Journal of Infectious Disease. The report found: “Results of our systematic review indicate an increase in the risk of hepatitis C infection among those who have tattooed.”

Kierra Slate, a second year Physical Therapist Assistant student at Mercer, received her home tattoos from her friend, Keith, who has been diagnosed with Hepatitis C.

“Mac, a professional tattoo artist at K & B Tattooing in Hightstown, NJ told The VOICE that, according to NJ State Law, ‘Everybody [working as a professional tattoo artist] has to have questioned anonymity, says he has given himself and a friend tattoos using a tattoo gun he made with a pen, a remote-controlled car motor, duct tape, a spoon, and guitar wire. He claims to have taken precautions to sterilize the wire (which is used to pierce the skin) before giving his friend a tattoo of a bicycle drawn in simple shapes. “I socked it in alcohol and boiled it in water” Ricky said. “Then he heated it until it was red hot.” He also says he made sure to sterilize the location of the tattoo using an alcohol swab.

Despite his efforts, however, Ricky is out of compliance with NJ state law regarding tattooing. According to the chapter dealing with ‘Body Art Procedures’, in ‘The New Jersey State Sanitary Code, not only must a practitioner have received 2,000 hours of on-the-job training, but the needles used in tattooing must come in hermetically-sealed ‘peel packs’.

Kierra Slate, a second year Physical Therapist Assistant major has three tattoos, all given to her by the same friend, Keith, an intravenous heroin user with Hepatitis C. Slate insists that she takes special precautions when receiving a tattoo from him. “I will not let Keith tattoo me. He must come out hermetically sealed.”

“I will not let Keith tattoo me if he’s under the influence. That’s just stupid.” Slate told The VOICE. “I watch him setup at aattooing studio from doing this, whether professional or not,” he says. “It’s not art, it’s mutilation.”

PHOTO | JAMES RESLIER-WELLS

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Inked with home tattoos

Bria Michelle
Bria Michelle, a 19 year-old, Criminal Justice major at Mercer, said her tattoo of roses on her left arm was not received in a professional tattoo parlor.

Danny Albi
Danny Albi, a second year Education Major at Mercer, got his tattoo at the same time as his buddy, Eli Foose, to celebrate Foose’s return home from Iraq. “The guy might as well have been professional, though he did it out of his house,” he said.

Eli Foose
Eli Foose, a first semester Liberal Arts major at Mercer says his “Death of Superman” tattoo was made during a two-week period when he came back from Iraq.

Brandon Savoy
Brandon Savoy, an 18 year-old Technician major at Mercer, says he got his tattoo recently from a friend of a friend. The ant, he says, is symbolic of his brother, Anthony.
A young recruit steps off the bus to begin his first day of a three month journey. After what should have been a two hour plane ride has turned into a 13 hour adventure, he is tired and anxious. Before he has time to think, a mascular Drill Instructor is in his face, screaming at him to “get his ass in line.”

The next 36 hours are full of more screaming, an abundance of vaccination shots, and a constant desire to sleep. When sleep finally comes, over 48 hours after he left his home, he passes out.

Three hours later, at 0400 (4am), he is awoken by more screaming Drill Instructors. He and his bunkmates throw on their gear as fast as they can, and start training. From 4am to 10pm, every day for three months, he and his new family are constantly berated and broken down, forcing them to rebuild each other to be stronger.

After three months, they emerge new men. This is the life of every new United States Marine. When Matt Swan was a 16 year old junior at Steinert High School, he decided that one day he would embark on this journey. “I knew I had to serve,” he says. When he turned 17, his parents signed the paperwork allowing him to enter into the DEP (delayed entry program) for the Marine Corp. Once he signed his intent papers, he passed the physical and written test, and swore in.

After graduating high school, Swan said goodbye to his family and friends, and stepped onto the plane to begin his journey.

“That’s when it hit me,” Swan says. “Up until me getting on that plane, it all felt fake. When we took off, all at once I realize ‘Hey, you’re starting your life now. This is real.’ It was an unsettling realization.”

After boot camp he was allowed to return home for 20 days; before going to North Carolina followed by California. “Obviously it was tough,” Swan says. “I didn’t sign up for easy. I knew going into it that it was going to be a hard life. It’s exactly what I expected and I love it.”

In North Carolina, he learned the various survival skills every marine is taught. From surviving in the wilderness alone to shooting high power machine guns, everything was covered.

“I think that was the coolest part of all my training,” Swan said while laughing. “Those big guns are loud as hell. It was impossible not to crack a grin the first time I shot one. It wasn’t all fun however. “Being in the field for that long was awful,” he added. “We went 28 days without hot water. I had to learn real quick how to shave without water or shaving cream.”

When he arrived in California for his MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) training, he says it was a “night and day” difference.

“We got to sleep in real beds for the first time in a month,” he remembers with a smile. “I got to take a hot shower every day, eat three real meals instead of MREs. It really made me realize how much stuff we all take for granted.”

While he’s away his family and friends have had to make their own adjustments. “The hardest part (for us) is having him gone for so long at a time,” Swan’s mother, Linda, says. “We know he was going to be gone a lot, but it’s tough sometimes when he’s gone for a long period.”

Liz Kent, Swan’s girlfriend, feels the same way. “It hurts him gone all the time,” she says. “Everyday I wake up wishing he was home with me. I couldn’t be more proud of him though. It’s hard for me, but I know it’s what he feels he has to do. That’s how he is. He loves this country so much and feels like it’s his duty to serve it.”

“Swan is one of the best men I know,” one of his best friends, Zack Pappas says. “When he’s home, no matter what I need I know I can call him. More than once I’ve called him to get me out of a tight situation, and, no matter where or what I’ve got myself into it, every time he’s come through for me and helped me out. If that’s not the definition of a great man, I don’t know what it is.”

Like Kent and Linda, Pappas misses him when he’s gone.”It’s really weird for me. We went from hanging out almost every day to me going without seeing him for months at a time. It sucks, but I know he’s doing the right thing.”

His current trip, however, will be the toughest test yet as he prepares to deploy to Japan. “Being in a foreign country is a weird experience,” Swan says. “I’ve been on vacation before, but this is completely different. Everyday I wake up and do my job, but I’m in Japan. It’s not an easy thing to get used to.”

Swan is expected to return home in early July, after he completes a ten month deployment.

“It’s gonna be rough, but we couldn’t be more proud of him,” Linda said.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE CLUB OFFERS K-9 DEMO

By James Reslen-Wells
Senior Reporter

The Mercer County Sheriff’s Department demonstrated the tactics of their K-9 Unit on the quad of Mercer’s West Windsor Campus at noon on Monday, August 24. The event was sponsored by Mercer’s Criminal Justice Club.

“Every fall I’m trying to bring [the K-9 unit] in,” said Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, and Criminal Justice Club faculty co-advisor Elizabeth BonDurant in an interview with The VOICE. Prof. BonDurant is a 25 year law enforcement veteran who served as chief of police of Plainsboro, NJ before coming to Mercer.

“Every year, BonDurant tries to do this for her students,” said Mercer’s Commanding Officer for security, Michael Flaherty, who was used as the mock target for the K-9 attack dog.

A group of students and faculty stopped to watch as Flaherty shouted a “training sleeve” and engaged the highly-trained German shepherd.

Professor BonDurant describes the training sleeve as “very thick,” saying it is made from “layers of burlap and canvas material.”

Flaherty said he had no qualms about participating in the demonstration and had no reservations about using the sleeve.

“I found it fun,” he said, adding, “it wasn’t scary or anything.”

Not everyone present was as composed. One female student got up and left, saying, “Get that dog away from me!” after the animal showed a keen interest in her Cup of Noodles.

Other onlookers took away different messages from the demonstration.

“It was cool,” said Ethan Hastings, “it taught you to stay away from police.” According to a short speech given by one of the officers present, the dogs are very versatile. In addition to being used to apprehend criminal suspects they are also trained to locate wounded humans. For that skill, actual human cadavers are used to train the dogs, the officer explained.

Professor BonDurant said she hoped the event would serve to “demystify the use of K-9 units. I think some people view them as attack dogs, but they are really a controlled tool of the police officers.”
Most students cannot tell if the instructor teaching their class is a full-time professor who has worked at the college for years, or a part-time professor who comes in once a week to teach a single class. In fact, part-time instructors also known as adjuncts, out number full-timers almost four to one at Mercer. There are currently 413 adjunct professors and 125 full-time professors according to the college’s Institutional Research Office. What does this mean for student success? More than you might think.

In an article entitled “Effects of Part-Time Faculty Employment on Community College Graduation Rates” that appeared in the Journal of Higher Education, published in November, 2006, the author, researcher Daniel Jacoby writes: “The principal finding of this study is that community college graduation rates decrease as the proportion of part-time faculty employed increases. The finding is confirmed when looking at the different measures of graduation rates.”

Other researchers have corroborated Jacoby’s findings, but other current literature suggests that there is another side to the story. For example, in the article “Does Cheaper Mean Better?” the impact of Using Adjunct Instructors on Student Outcomes at Mercer County Community College, the examination of 43,000 students leads them to conclude that, “taking a class from an adjunct often increases the number of subsequent courses that a student takes in a given subject and may increase the likelihood that the student majors in the subject.”

Good or bad, all the research suggests that the fate of students and colleges is tied to part-time labor. Colleges across the country are relying more and more heavily on adjunct professors as a cost saving measure. Some community colleges in New Jersey, like Burlington, are now relying almost entirely on adjuncts to teach all of their classes, a move that has come under steep criticism from teachers’ unions.

So why are colleges so bent on hiring part-timers?

Adjuncts have the same credentials to teach as full-time professors, but, by contract, their workload is usually half the full-time load and they do not get health and other benefits. At Mercer, for example, per each credit hour they teach, an adjunct can earn anywhere between $771 to $788 depending upon their academic rank. Thus, while a full-time faculty member may make between $45,000 and $55,000 per year plus benefits at the start of their career at Mercer, an adjunct who teaches two classes per semester – a typical arrangement – would earn $9,456 for the year.

The result? The college saves a lot of money, but adjuncts can’t earn a living wage working at a single community college. To make ends meet, adjuncts frequently teach part-time at multiple colleges or work a full-time job in a different field. Many adjuncts hold out hope that shifting their strengths in a part-time position will position them to be hired when a full-time spot opens up.

Dr. Joel Goldstein is an adjunct professor teaching Sociology classes at Mercer County Community College for almost twenty years. Goldstein originally started as a tutor, then worked her way into an adjunct position teaching basic English courses. In her decades at Mercer, Goldstein says only a few times has a full-time professor position opened up, and although told she might get one, she has so far been passed over twice.

“When I came here, I already had a PhD, three books published, and had articles published in the New York Times. This was not a place that welcomed high achievers.” Dr. Goldstein told The VOICE.

Goldstein used to be a full-time professor at Rutgers, but left because, she says, “It is hard to be a person that cares about their work when politics (within the college) interfere with that.”

When asked if she missed being a full-time professor, she said, “Yes, because of no health benefits, and not being paid very much money.” She continued, “I wouldn’t for a penny say that it’s good to be poor.”

Do the findings by Dr. Dan Jacoby that suggest relying on adjuncts lowers graduation rates for community college student mean that adjuncts aren’t great teachers, or is there something else at work? One full-time Mercer professor, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, suggested that the problem is not poor teaching from adjuncts but poor support from college. He said, “I really don’t think the [Mercer] administration respects adjuncts. I once heard an administrator say, ‘Adjuncts are like Klemens, you use one, and you throw it away’.”

When asked to enumerate specific ways the adjuncts are disadvantaged the professor said, “Adjuncts are always given the times that no other full-time professors want to teach, and if a full-time professor needs more classes, a class can be taken away from the adjunct who then loses that class and the time (spent) preparing for it.” In another example, he noted, “Most adjuncts rely on copying machines that weren’t designed for the volume of copying they do.”

Do adjuncts agree with this assessment? One long-time adjunct professor at Mercer, we’ll call him Adjunct X, who also asked to remain anonymous for fear of job reprisal said, “I realize that [adjuncts] are a money saving commodity. I understand the benefits thing, but we have to do the same amount of work, be held to the same amount of scrutiny, produce the same way, and care as much about our students.”

When asked if Mercer supports their professors Adjunct X said, “Yes and no, it is on a by case basis. Quite often it is easy to blame the adjuncts, and say lack of back up from administration, that is how they fail to support us.”

Nox continued, “We cannot get the school to agree on guaranteed employment rates. Other schools have guarantees that guarantee employment for one to two years with no benefits, but for whatever reason, Mercer does not want to do that. We can be terminat ed at anytime...I know the possibility of being fired is there, but its like death. I know it can happen at anytime, but worrying about death gets in the way of life. The same applies to teaching.”

Dr. Diane Campbell, Mercer’s Dean of Students, was once an adjunct at the beginning of her career. She told The VOICE, “[As an adjunct] I always felt treated fairly” and that “[Adjuncts] really bring an unique knowledge and a richness to the college and the people students have access to.” When asked if she thought the college supported the adjunct staff, she said, “Definitely.”

Mercer used to have a group called M.A.S.T., the Mercer Adjunct Support Team, and posters for this service still remain on campus, though it seems to have been disbanded some years ago. It was a group of full-time faculty who de voted some time to helping adjuncts get adjusted and find resources on how adjunts received one evening of orientation before they start teaching. Their only other support comes in the form of the adjunct coordinators and liaisons who hire them.

Denise Ingram, full-time professor of Sociology and Women’s Studies has served as an adjunct co ordinator for the last seven years, working to hire, advise and mentor incoming adjuncts in the Social Sciences department. She told The VOICE, “Adjuncts are not paid very much, so that makes it difficult to hire the best and brightest, and then difficult to keep them here.”

Professor Ingram continued, “Adjuncts who have full time jobs, leave. They teach one or two classes then they are not on campus. They may become not tied into the culture of the faculty, they become very isolated.”

While there is no easy way to end the disparity between full-time and part-time faculty many colleges have developed a class of professors who will not become tenured but who teach full loads, receive benefits and are given contracts that guarantee employment for several years. Because salaries are lower for these positions, they still serve as a cost saving measure for colleges overall. They are not untenured, they have more investment in their school’s and time to connect to students, thus helping students stay in college and graduate, which ensures the college will receive tuition dollars.

As Mercer faculty move into a contract negotiation year, the role of adjuncts and their contractual rights and obligations will be examined by the college and the teachers’ union. Students have an investment in the outcome of these negotiations. The VOICE will cover the story as it unfolds.
New law makes it easier to fire NJ teachers

Governor signs law changing NJ’s century old K-12 teacher tenure policies

By Mariana Braz & Laymon Flack

All K-12 teachers and students at public schools in New Jersey will be affected by the new tenure law signed by Governor Chris Christie on August 6. The Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey Act (TEACHNJ) is intended to upgrade the oldest tenure law in the country. New Jersey’s previous tenure law has been on the books for over a century. The state's teachers’ union – the NJEA – has endorsed the new model.

Tenure is a status that teachers have traditionally earned from the practice of performed duties well for a certain number of years. Receiving tenure means that the teacher cannot be fired without due process. Under Governor Christie’s new law, longevity in teaching is not the most significant factor in awarding tenure.

According to the NJEEF (New Jersey Educator Effectiveness Task Force) Interim Report, Sources used to evaluate teachers – other than their students’ test scores – will include annual surveys to determine a school’s “learning climate,” observations of faculty made by administrators at least twice a year, and evaluations of faculty portfolios demonstrating how they implemented standards to aid in student success.

Dr. Samuel Stewart, Executive Superintendent of Schools of Mercer County, explained that each district has its own way of evaluating teachers, but soon every district will follow the same protocol stipulated by the Department of Education. Ten districts were selected by the Department of Education to try out the new system before its adoption statewide next year.

Dr. Stewart explained the reason none of Mercer County districts are part of the pilot is because they did not apply. He also said that “they all are complying with new law, they are just not in the pilot.”

Under the current system, 60 percent of student achievement is attributed to the teacher, and principal, 25 percent of that is directly from the principal. Under the new system, 50 percent of the responsibility would be on the teachers and the other 50 percent on the student.

Dottie Depalma, an English teacher at Steinert High School in Hamilton, thinks this particular change doesn’t make a lot of sense for several reasons. “First, if you teach a subject that is not traditionally tested on a wide scale, which is basically any subject that is not English or math, how will achievement be determined? Second, not all students learn the same way. What if the progression is from an F to a D? Will that be enough?”

Christine Forte, a Math teacher at Grover Cleveland Middle School in Caldwell, is also somewhat wary of the new law. She says that putting 50 percent of the evaluation on student achievement simply provides a new way for the government to blame the teachers for the failure of the system. She calls it a “big can of worms.”

“Truth is, evaluating students is a for-profit business, but teaching them is non-profit, paid for with taxes. It’s just one more way to sell the public on an idea that will cost them more in taxes, without telling them that’s what is happening,” said Forte.

Mercer Professor of Education Elizabeth DiGiorgio, counselor for Kappa Delta Pi and co-advisor for the Future Teachers Club, said she believes the new system will give teachers the support they need to do their best in class.

“I cannot say with 100 percent certainty that it will benefit the educational system. However, I do believe it will help improve teaching practice. I think evaluations will be able to identify ineffective teachers.” -Mercer Professor of Education Elizabeth DiGiorgio

The reform was based on the New Jersey Educator Effectiveness Task Force Report released in March 2010. When asked how this will affect teacher performance, Professor DeGiorgio said that everything has to be considered in order to evaluate a teacher: “the resources available, student diversity, variation in academic levels, special needs, parental support, and environmental design. So when looking at test scores you can't blame it all on teachers.”

TEACHNJ makes three major changes on the old tenure law. The first modification is related to the years of experience. The new system requires that teachers be evaluated for their efficiency and not how long they have been teaching.

Although Dottie Depalma of Steinert is skeptical of the emphasis the new law places on student test scores, she is more accepting of the law’s emphasis on evaluations as a path to tenure rather than seniority being the path.

“Once the rest of the working world, years of experience only count if you are doing a good job. If you're doing a poor job, no amount of work experience is going to get you a raise. Performance is performance, either you are doing the job or not,” says Depalma.

Under the old system, ineffective teachers who have tenure sometimes faced penalties for academic ineffectiveness but hardly any of them were ever dismissed from their duties for poor teaching. According to the Department of Education of NJ website, less than 20 teachers have lost tenure for inefficiency over the past three years. Up to now the process of firing a teacher who has tenure has been lengthy and complex and could cost more than $100,000. The new law streamlines the process to no more than 105 days and $7,500.

Although various teachers’ union representatives have expressed concern over the ease with which teachers can now be stripped of their tenure, few have objected to the aspect of the new law that ensures that teachers who get poor evaluations will receive assistance to improve their teaching.

Professor DeGiorgio explained that the new system will give teachers a chance to improve their skills and get a better evaluation next time.

Once an ineffective teacher is identified, that teacher will be provided the opportunity for professional development and be supported by their principal,” DiGiorgio said.

Dr. Stewart, Mercer’s Executive Superintendent, sees the new law as a tool for student success, saying: “Engaging students and having students accept responsibility are two keys in raising achievement levels.”
Mercer’s men’s soccer team lost again on Saturday, September 29 when they played at home against Louisburg College’s Hurricanes from North Carolina. The Hurricanes beat the Vikings 1-0. So far the Vikings have lost seven out of the 11 games they’ve played since the soccer season began in late August.

The Viking men’s team has 14 new players out of a 25-man team. The team also has a new coach, the third coach in the past three years, Widmarc Tigana Dalce, a former Vikings center midfielder who helped take the team to a National Championship in 1996.

During the first half of the Louisburg game the ball stayed close to the Vikings goal as they successfully intercepted numerous attempts by the Hurricanes to score.

According to Vikings fan Delaney Kelly from the University of Maryland, the team needs to work together more.

“They get frustrated with each other, they’re hotheads,” said Kelly.

The Vikings made multiple attempts to gain control of the ball but that didn’t seem to satisfy goalkeeper John Robert Richards as he shouted things like, “That shit ain’t gonna work,” at his teammates.

“The players are good but a lot are lazy and need to find their feet,” said Liberal Arts major and player on Mercer’s girls soccer team, Rachel Martinez.

Martinez has been to all but one of the Vikings home games and said she can see them making it to the championship.

“They are doing well with their regional games, which are the ones that count,” said Martinez.

The Hurricanes scored shortly after the second half of the game began. According to Vikings freshman Sergio Ojeda that’s when the team lost their momentum.

“We needed to keep our heads in the game after they scored, you never know what’s going to happen until the last minute of the game,” said Ojeda.

Both teams received yellow cards for rough play in the last half and the Vikings lost a second player to injury.

Fans were pleased throughout the game with Ben Asor and Sascha Haecker who both play fullback position, as they fought to keep the ball away from the Hurricanes.

According to Ojeda, the Hurricanes are one of the best teams the Vikings have played so far this season.

“We could have won, had a lot of opportunities,” said Ojeda, “We haven’t faced a team like that a lot this season, but it was a close game.”

After the game, Hurricanes forward Jacques Francois said, “[The Vikings] are hard competition, they kept us running back and forth a lot.”

According to Coach Dalce, the biggest problem his team is having so far this season is that they cannot follow through with a play and score. Numerous injuries also have slowed the men down. “They are a good team having a bad moment,” said Coach Dalce told The VOICE.

According to Dalce, who cause he wanted to give back to the school where he got started, there are big differences in the team he used to play on and the one he coaches now.

“The players lack passion, I can tell by their body language when they are around each other,” said Dalce, “Why fight each other? Fight together.”

Vikings captain, physical education major Kelvin Flores, said it has been hard to get his teammates on track this season because a lot of them are fresh out of high school and need to get used to being on a college team.

Ojeda agreed, telling The VOICE that the key difference between playing for high school and college is that the games are more physical and you have to think a lot quicker.

Flores is concerned about team cohesion. He says he believes it will help the team play better if they can come together more off the field.

“We started going out and doing more things together to become more of a family,” said Flores.

Dalce agrees that the team needs to bond more. He said they are starting things like pasta dinners together, which is something the coach before him didn’t do.

According to Ojeda the Vikings have come a long way from pre-season to now. He says, “We have been through ups and downs and lost games together this season and that makes us stronger as a family,” said Ojeda.
Merce r files faulty crime data

SECURITY

Not Submitting Reports to the Community On Time

In terms of timeliness, Mercer is obliged to make its annual reports on October 1. VOICE staffs requested the data on the Clery Handbook on the campus has not been posted as of press deadline. The 2011 security report was ultimately posted online on October 5, but was (and as of press deadline still is) inaccurately labeled “2012.”

Why the delay? In an interview with the VOICE, Mercer’s President, Dr. Patricia Donohue, said, “I have to sign off on it before it's filed, before it becomes an official record.”

Commanding Security Officer Michael Flaherty said that when the law does not require anyone to sign off on the security report before it’s filed, he submitted it to the president and vice president to “make sure they're aware of it.”

Failing to Cover Correct Geographical Area

When a college has more than one campus, data has to be compiled for each campus separately. On page 15, the current Clery Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting, a document compiled by the Department of Education to help colleges understand and meet their Clery obligations, it reads as follows:

"If your institution has more than one campus, each campus must comply independently with all of the Clery Act and the fire- and safety-related HEA requirements as described in this handbook. For the purpose of these requirements, consider an additional location a separate campus if it meets all of the following criteria:
– Your institution owns or controls the site;
– It is not reasonably geographically contiguous with the main campus;
– It has an organized program of study; and
– There is at least one person on site acting in an administrative capacity."

On the Department of Education’s website there are listings for both the James Kerney and West Windsor campuses (the data for these listings is identical for the last three years, zeros across the board). But Mercer’s own PDF filings do not differentiate between the two. Although Security Chief Flaherty did say he had received Clery training, he also told THE VOICE that the report posted on Mercer’s website is for both campuses.

Erroneously Combining Two Campuses Data

According to the law, colleges are responsible for reporting crimes that take place on campus property. THE VOICE Handbook devotes pages and pages to explaining how a college must determine what counts as their property, explaining each possibility in detail. Does a study abroad on a campus in India count? No. Does the college's parking lot count, even if it is leased from another entity? Yes. Does the coffee shop across the street, the one that students go to all the time, count? No.

The handbook is very clear, however, that the geography of the college includes “the public sidewalk, street, and opposite sidewalk along all four borders of the campus.” The sidewalks are crucial to understanding Mercer’s mis-reporting, since many of the incidents omitted from the reports occurred on the street just outside of the James Kerney Campus.

1. The data is not posted on time
2. The data for the two campuses is combined
3. Proper geography is not covered
4. Data from local law enforcement is omitted
5. Data from campus records is omitted

By Laura Pollack
Senior Reporter

On April 5, 1986, Lehigh University freshman Jeanne Clery was, according to police reports, beaten, tortured, sodomized, raped and strangled in her own dorm room by another Lehigh student. No one had told Jeanne’s parents or the parents of her many classmates about the 38 violent crimes that had happened on the campus in the three years before her death.

Driven by the notion that having that information might have lead them to make different decisions, Jeanne’s parents fought to get a federal law passed that would require colleges to keep security logs and to file annual crime statistics reports for their campuses. The “Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990” is most commonly known as the Clery Act.

The College VOICE has carefully examined Mercer’s annual Clery reports going back for the last three years, compared that data against our own reports on campus crimes and local police records, and has determined that the data the college has been submitting to the Department of Education has been inaccurate for years.

The problems in Mercer’s crime data reporting include five basic violations:

1. The data is not posted on time
2. The data for the two campuses is combined
3. Proper geography is not covered
4. Data from local law enforcement is omitted
5. Data from campus records is omitted

By Laura Pollack & Mariana Braz
Senior Reporters

Merce r’s Security Chief Flaherty, however, told THE VOICE that colleges are not responsible for reporting what happens on the sidewalk across the street. He said, “It has to be adjacent [to campus]. If it occurs across the street and it's not our property then it's reported by the municipalities. If I don't report on it, the Trenton police will, so we're covered on both ends,” he said.

While all of the crimes reported on Clery are also reported to the police, and investigated by them, the college is still responsible for reporting the crime if it occurred within its own geographic perimeter.

A security breach of Mercer's student data took place on August 24, according to a letter that was sent out to more than 14,000 students on September 28. From Mercer's computer lab, the student was able to access the personal information, including social security numbers.

According to the letter sent to students, “the College does not believe that any identity theft, fraud or misuse of your personal information occurred.”

In an interview with THE VOICE, President Dr. Patricia Donohue and Executive Director of Information Technology Services Susan Bowen explained that the investigation was initiated immediately after the incident.

"We have no knowledge of any fraud. We can't find evidence of the system being hacked other times," said Donohue. "The reason the law requires us to tell everybody is in case there was an incident that we weren't able to find or identify, but Mrs. Bowen's team checked everything imaginable and was not able to find any evidence," she explained.

An article published by The Times of Trenton on October 6, affirmed that the student personal information "was inadvertently open to public access in the school's computer network for as long as two years."

Despite the college not having any knowledge of the fraud, the security breach is still classified as a hacking according to experts. Robert Rottkamp, Key Account Manager of Nettrude Inc., a company specialized in cyber security, explained that unauthorized access to student files is considered hacking.

"Accessing data without permission is generally a criminal offense potentially punishable by fines or even jail time. 50k/4 years," said Rottkamp.

Other students are angered about the delay in relaying the information to the students. Despite the security breach taking place on August 24,
The Clery Act uses a broad interpretation of what must be counted. Generally speaking, schools must err on the side of caution. This point is underscored in the Clery Handbook when it says, "You must disclose reported offenses, not the findings of a court, coroner or jury or the decision of a prosecutor. Classify and count crimes from the records of calls for service, complaints and investigations."

Thus, every report that does not lead to arrest or trial must still be counted. The broad scope of the law is clear in that it does not require that a crime be seen to completion to count. The Clery Handbook Rules, "Do not differentiate between attempted and completed crimes. The only exception to this rule applies to attempts or assaults to murder when the victim does not die."

According to detailed records from the Trenton Police Department (download the Mercer's Clery reports for the Trenton PD's reports in pdf form from our website at www.mcvoice.org) during the last three years, within a 500' radius of the downtown area, there were 113 arrests made leading to 414 charges.

However, most of these crimes are not counted by Clery either because they do not fall within our geographic area of inclusion or because they are types of crime Clery doesn’t consider, such as simple assault or theft of property from within a motor vehicle. The VOICE went through dozens of crimes with the Trenton Police Department, ruling out all but those that occurred either on campus property or on the sidewalks on either side of the street surrounding campus.

For example, the arrest occurred outside the street at the Trenton Crisis Ministry does not count because it is not our building. And even though we lease space from the Daylight/Twilight high school, we are not obliged to report the arrests made there in which a female student was slapped on the buttocks while trying to exercise in the gym, or another student hit in the face allegedly without provocation, or a student smashed a glass display case with his fist. Those do not go in Mercer’s report.

The college is obliged, however, to report the robbery, motor vehicle theft, the two aggravated assaults, the hate crime and the four drug possession arrests that were made on campus property or exterior property immediately adjacent to it during the last three years. Yet, with one exception, none of this data appears on Mercer’s Clery reports.

### THE DATA YOU NEVER SAW*

#### Criminal Offenses — Total 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>1 on 2/7/11 — Prof. Matthew Giobbi held up a knife point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Theft</td>
<td>1 on 6/8/10 — at 115 East Hanover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Hate Crimes — Total 1

| Racial                  | 1 on 8/30/11 — Simple Assault on Student Vincenzo Campo with "Bias Intimidation." |

#### Arrests and Referrals for Disciplinary Action — Total 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Abuse Violations</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 = 2/16/10 — Pos., Distr of Narcotics/School Zone — 105 E. Hanover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 = 2/19/10 — Pos., Distr of Narcotics/School Zone — 105 E Hanover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 = 2/21/11 — Pos., Distr of Narcotics/School Zone — 130 North Broad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 = 4/21/11 — Pos., Distr of Narcotics/School Zone — 105 E Hanover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All of these crimes accused on the James Kerney Campus except for the Hate Crime. West Windsor has had several car break-ins, but theft of property from a motor vehicle is not a crime that must be reported under Clery.

**All data comes from verified police records.

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**Repercussions**

This is not the first time that Mercer has not been in compliance with the act. In the May 8, 2006 edition of the VOICE, it was reported that the daily security log was not being properly updated.

When asked to comment about the college’s Clery Act data, Jose Fernandez, Executive Director for Human Resources and Compliance, told the VOICE to speak to Security Chief Flaherty.

Although Flaherty’s office is tasked with compiling the data, it should be noted that the Mercer’s failure to report accurate Clery data dates back far before Flaherty became chief in 2011 and that he reports to Bryan Marshall, Director of College Safety, who would not speak to the VOICE despite repeated requests for comment.

The Clery Act states that the Department of Education’s “crime issue civil fines up to 27,500 dollars per violation substantial misrepresentation of the number, location or manner in which incidents are required to be reported or for a violation of any other provision of the safety- and security-related HEA regulations.”

So far the largest fine ever imposed for Clery violations was $357,000 against Eastern Michigan University, but Penn State may face fines into the millions of dollars for failing to report rape crimes, including a child abuse report that were revealed during the trial of Jerry Sandusky.

If the Department of Education investigates Mercer, fines could exceed $200,000.

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the letters were not sent out to students until September 28.

"We should have been informed as soon as it happened. I don’t like the idea of someone messaging with my social security number," said Jabib Louis, an education major.

According to President Donaldson, the reason behind the college not informing students for over a month was because "of all the double checking and guarantees."

Donaldson said that if the college had found evidence of the system being hacked or multiple breaches the college would have informed students earlier.

"I don’t want to share bad information. Sometimes sharing no information is better than sharing bad information, until I’m sure I can tell you the facts," Donaldson said.

Merediht did not reply to any outside security service to help them address any other possible weaknesses in the system, according to Bown.

According to Martin Fiet, Director of Nettitude Inc., a company based in New York City that specializes IT security and risk management assessment, hiring outside consultants is the appropriate way to handle this kind of situation.

"It is absolutely appropriate for a breached organization to engage with a professional consultancy. Sweeping it under the rug does not address the problem — a more serious breach or a leaked story about this kind of breach not being remedied can both be embarrassing and catch the attention of attackers," explained Watts. Watts also said that while the college is referring to the incident as improper “accessing” of data, the appropriate term to use in this case is, in fact, “hacking.”

According to New Jersey’s electronic crimes statute, “2C:20-25. A person is guilty of computer criminal activity if the person purposely or knowingly and without authorization, or in excess of authorization, accesses any data, data base, or computer network."

The State Police of New Jersey have a special Cyber Crimes Unit with specialized investigative squads and a hotline number to call. Part of the mission of the CCU, according to their website, is to protect the computer networks of the state and local agencies that deal with federal and international matters.

If the college does not provide the State Police with the required information, the CCU may contact the Department of Education.

If the Department of Education investigates Mercer, fines could exceed $200,000.
Two competing Halloween scare attractions vie for locals' dollars. The two places, Corner of Chaos on the corner or Old Trenton and Princeton-Hightstown roads, and Field of Terror on Perriemville Rd, have similar setups and fee structures. As participants proceed through darkened corn mazes on temporarily converted farmland, they encounter actors in ghoulish make-up and blood spattered costumes who scare the crap out of them by revving chainsaws, bludgeoning fake bodies with axes, lunging at nubile necks with necrotic zombie hands and so forth.

Both places are similar temporarily converted farmland, have similar setups and fees structures. Field of Terror on Perrineville Rd, has been around for five years, while Field of Terror has been around for nine. John Specca, the Chaos owner, insists he doesn't crib ideas from his competition.

"We try to stay as unique as possible I don't really like to use any other haunts' ideas. To me that's not good," says Specca. The four Halloween mazes at Corner of Chaos include The Nightmare Machine, The Wicked Wagon Ride, the Barbaric Barnyard and the epic Wooded Wasteland. Prices at the Corner of Chaos range from 13 dollars for one attraction to 40 dollars for all four together or 60 dollars for a VIP pass.

The prices at Terror are pretty much the same, 15 dollars for a single attraction to 38 dollars for all four and if you want to skip the lines VIP passes range from 30 to 65 dollars.

Located in East Windsor, NJ, the Corner of Chaos' Halloween corn maze is full of performers in ghoulish make-up and blood spattered costumes. It is not clear how the two places set their annual prices or if having two competing venues keeps costs down, but getting the full experience costs about 40 dollars and that may be out of the price range for a lot of broke college students. Still, it is cheaper (and scarier) than buying all the supplies and a costume of your own and hosting your own Halloween party.

One thing that sets Chaos apart is that along with the four halloween mazes there is a live spooked up dance team which performs on stage in the midway to choreographed music. The act is much the kind you would see at Six Flags but isn't being done at other haunted Halloween venues in the area.

CHEAP AND SKETCHY, BUT GOOD

The Starland Ballroom in Sayerville, NJ is a gritty local music venue that makes it possible for community college students to improve their social lives, get shitty and have a good time without completely emptying their wallets. A broad spectrum of musical genres can be heard at Starland and the ticket and booze prices are better than anything you'll find in New York or Philadelphia. Just beware of assholes, because they seem to be there and in the numbers.

I'm ballin' on a bud- get, so I appreciate getting in to see a decent band for $20 rather than the $30-40 I'd have to spend at Irving Plaza or Upstate Concert Hall in New York. Moreover, Starland hosts a variety of acts from hardcore bands such as All Shall Perish to gangster rapper Wacka Flacka Flame from Brick Squad.

With ticket in hand I set off to not only listen to one of my favorite bands but also to further investigate this suspiciously cheap venue. After a forty minute drive from the Mercer I was dismayed to be shocked with a seven dollar parking fee, but the neighborhood kind of sucks, so I was at least comfortable to know I wouldn't have to walk back to my 1998 Jetta at the end of the night only to find a window smashed out and my GPS stripped from the dash.

With my car "Betsy" in good hands it was time to rage! At the front door I displayed my ticket and ID, receiving a wrist band, allowing me to enter the bar area. The doormen and women were extremely pleasant, the man checking my ID even wished me a happy birthday.

As I walked through the doors the scent of alcohol and body odor flooded my senses. It's not a pleasant smell exactly but it is what you get in a packed ballroom filled with drunken people dancing. The place is a little rough, but as my eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring security presence. Burly eyes and ears adjusted to the light and noise I noticed a reassuring

As I prepared to head home at the end of the night I asked a couple other young adults for their opinion of Starland. Bobby Gibbs said he was a fan of the drinks prices but was not so happy with other aspects of the venue. He said, "I wish you didn't have to pay for parking, all they had to eat was cardboard pizza." Michael Simpson, a former Mercer student said, "The location is close to home rather than New York City, Philly or Atlantic City. I definitely would recommend it to friends. I had a blast. The sound was good and price was right!" Simpson got it about right.
A fear of the dark is rooted in a fear of the unknown. Tapping into that fear of the unknown is an easy thing to do when standing on the Revolutionary War battleground in Princeton, NJ. The sound of feet crunching over fallen leaves, the shine of the full moon lighting the way, and the realization that around 50 soldiers are buried under the ground beneath your feet is enough to send a shiver down anyone’s spine.

I joined 90 people of all different ages at Princeton Tour Company’s first ever ghost hunt at the Princeton Battlefield on Saturday, September 29. Owner Mimi Omiecinski led the tour with the help of her parents and several local historians.

Energetic and excit-able, Omiecinski asked participants to focus on the soldiers on both the American and British sides because not choosing sides and treating the energies with respect is the most effective way to illicit a response from the other side.

Halfway through the tour, participants were given ghost hunting equipment including electromagnetic field readers, or EMF thermometers to measure changes in temperature, and dowser rods.

Originally used to locate water underground by feeling out energies, dowser rods were the most effective means to communicate with the other side. By simply holding them at arms length and asking a spirit to cross or uncross the thin metal rods, an answer can be gleaned.

“Cross the rods if you’re a British soldier,” I asked my rods and then patiently waited with the rods grasped firmly in my hands. I wasn’t waiting long; the rods moved in front of me, crossing almost perfectly over each other.

I hear you naysayers saying it’s just the wind, or I did it myself. However, when the rods are in your hands, there is a clear distinction between holding them too loose and they move on their own, or when they are firmly held and something else is moving them. After spending a few moments with a spirit, asking if he was at peace and with his family (he was) and if he was a fan of his king (he was not), I realized I had been left behind.

Catching up with the group, we ended up near the pillars where soldiers were suspected to be buried. Here is where I brought out the thermometer, scanning for changes in temperature. Suddenly, the meter read 14 degrees and I began trying to communi-cate.

I asked the spirit if he could change the meter’s reading from 14 and bring it down to read 10 degrees. After a few moments, the numbers steadily began falling until it finally reached 10 degrees. The num-ber stayed there until a fellow hunter walked in front of the reader and brought the temper-ature up to around 45 de-grees.

At the end of the tour, we were taken to the Quak-er House and able to walk through the cemetery behind it. At this point, I wasn’t able to communicate with anyone there but the hairs on the back of my neck were still standing up from the spirit at the pillars.

Participants in the ghost hunt were charged $20, 25 percent of which will be going toward the restoration of the Thomas Clarke house, a building used as a hospital for British and American soldiers during the war.

Propelled by a fasci-nation with the personalities of Princeton and the desire to have something to do while her son was in school, Omie-cinski started Princeton Tour Company in 2006. Other than their weekly ghost tours of Princeton’s campus, the company offers walking tours of Princeton as well.

The company origi-nally began as a bike tour group, but that venture didn’t pan out. About two years into the business, guests started mentioning that Princeton’s campus might be haunted.

Then The Nassau Presbyte-rian Church offered the com-pany access to the cemeteries. Guests could then go to grave-stones of prominent figures in the cemetery.

“I don’t care who you are and where you come from, that’s a decent ghost tour,” said Omiecinski.
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ter was under review.

Prof. Walker's tensions with the college have been mounting for some time. In August, 2011, Walker sued the college.

Walker v. Mercer County Community College is an ongoing civil rights case. Dr. Walker filed a complaint against Mercer in August, 2011. In Dr. Walker's original complaint she said, "On or about Tuesday, 23 August 2011 the Vice President for Academic Affairs informed me I had been passed over for promotion for which an inferior white female was selected."

Dr. Walker says in her filings, submitted to Judge Anne E. Thompson of the U.S. District Court for the State of New Jersey, that the college's failure to promote her was "retaliation for my opposing extant employment practices favoring inferior white female employees."

When asked about the Walker v. Mercer County Community College case, Dean Schore would only say: "I know it exists."

When President Donohue was asked if Walker v. Mercer had anything to do with Dr. Walker's decision to apparently leave campus, Dr. Donohue said, "To my knowledge, it has absolutely nothing to do with this."

Not long after Walker initiated her civil rights case, which has not yet been resolved, other tensions emerged. A letter about racial tensions on the campus — entitled "Gold Standard Skunks" — was written and on January 27, Mercer's Vice President, Dr. Guy Generals, emailed the faculty, attaching the letter and requesting to know who wrote it. In his email, which was obtained by The VOICE using an open records request, he indicated that the letter had been submitted to major publications such as The Times of Trenton and the Chronicle of Higher Education that ultimately declined to run it.

On January 29, Dr. Walker responded to General's email, also sending it to the entire faculty, and saying, simply: "signed: L. Renee Walker, Ph.D., African American, American of Black descent."

In "Gold Standard Skunks," Dr. Walker condemned the college's administrators for their racial politics. She wrote: "Privileged minority administrators at Mercer are unwilling to acknowledge the consensus complexity they use to force African and African American faculty to regurgitate Eurocentric ideolo-

gies and to mirror the consequent self-loathing behavior that cannot help us overcome the institutionalized female, race, and class biases that characterize this and community colleges all across the country."

The ongoing tensions seem to be affecting administrators' willingness to speak on the record about Walker and her teaching status on campus. In a follow-up interview with Dean Schore he would not comment as to whether or not Prof. Walker was expected to return to teach her classes starting in November, after the presidential election is over. He said that the question was "too personal" and was "privileged information." He also would not comment on what would happen to the adjuncts who are currently teaching her classes if and when she does return.

The VOICE asked President Donohue when the last time was that Dr. Walker was on campus and Dr. Donohue declined to answer, but she did say that Walker's supervising Dean, Dr. Robin Schore, and her Department Chair, Dr. Coenen, "went into instant mode" on realizing that Dr. Walker was no longer on campus.

Donohue stressed that their main concern was to make sure the students are getting what they need. When asked if the substitutes were hired through the proper channels, Dean Schore said that they were not. But numerous students in Walker's classes reported that the adjuncts are doing well and are "great."

According to Dr. Coenen, on Sept. 28, he and Dean Schore began interviewing the substitutes that Dr. Walker appointed to teach her classes. In an interview with the VOICE on Oct. 3, Dr. Karen Bearce, Professor of Psychology at Mercer told the VOICE that she was concerned for the students. She noted that 82 students are currently enrolled in Walker's classes according to Mercer's website, "82 students that are impacted by her teaching status this semester... As an advisor in Liberal Arts I have students wandering around, wondering: is she going to be back?"

Prof. Bearce also explained that Dr. Walker is "the only person who coordinates the Social Work program...October is when we start advising for the spring...[Walker's students] are in need of advising help."

"Christabel Foster, a Human Services major, is in Dr. Walker's Human Behavior in the Social Environment II class..." Foster said she believes Dr. Walker is in Virginia conducting some research pertaining to voter registration. She continued, "I guess I don't know what she's doing exactly. I'm really looking forward to hearing about it, though, because I'm sure it's something exciting."

Foster and many other students involved in Walker's Social Work program had extremely positive things to say about her as a teacher, and said they believe that her absence has not posed any problems for them.

Foster said that since Dr. Walker's leaving campus, "We haven't skipped a beat."

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Kyle Diana is a second year performer in the Wooded Wasteland at Corner of Chaos and prior to that at Six Flags Great Adventure’s Fright Fest for the previous two years. Diana has the insider’s experience; he says, “I mean, the kids I work with are great, the bosses are great, the surroundings, I mean, it’s like we’re one huge demented family with a bunch of freaks and creeps.”

Over at Field of Terror this year’s mazes include the Killer Cornfield corn maze and the Zombie Attack Haunted hayride. The dark and spooky Unknown Barn and the visually stimulating Dementia 3D haunted barn hitch give the visitor a unique neon colored 3D experience. The neon effect is gruesome and awesome and Terror is the only one doing it.

Terror owner, Sharon Kyle recalls how her business got started saying, “Years ago we used to go to a Halloween party and we would go through all this trouble, all this work setting up for a few friends and one night we would have like all hayrides... We bought this farm in 2003 in East Windsor [We bought] 77 acres and decided to try it and start doing it because we love Halloween.”

Located in West Windsor, NJ, the Field of Terror’s Halloween corn maze includes a haunted school bus.

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Joe McGeady, a member of Occupation Princeton, said, "Mrs. Obama’s visit, “You may be taking money from some of the local people at the, but you made you feel excluded in the past.”

By joining those who she once criticized, Obama appears to be tacitly conforming to their attitudes and behavior.

Andrew Golden of Occupation Princeton says he finds Obama’s visit objectionable. “Princeton University is a microcosm of the larger economic reality in the U.S.; the wealthy oppress the middle class.”

In Princeton there isn’t much of a lower or middle class to oppress. Poor people simply can’t afford to live there. Until recently even people who lived in Princeton could not but not always be to them “black first and a student second.”

The fact that Mrs. Obama once criticized the university is by way of the college is now returning to fund-raising shows that either she believes the college has overcome its legacy of fostering of white, elite, and military-oriented pro-fessor, who testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee’s subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights saying that only .000063% of America, approximately 196 people have funded the “Super PAC” contributions. In his testimony Lessig claimed this has caused people to lose faith that their government is responsive to their needs because they are convinced that they care more about those who fund their campaigns.

Occupancy Princeton addressed the issue in a letter to Michelle Obama. They wrote, “You have chosen to use this rare visit to Princeton to meet with the 1%, accepting their money and favoring their interests and political voice over the 99%, thereby per- petuating the bias against the underprivileged in favor of the wealthy. Is this what you expect for the next four years if the President is reelected?”

President Obama has openly criticized Super PACs by the large number of non-com- petitive market, the price may fluctuate. The project is a potential financial boondoggle, but there are no signs that theSREC are traded in a com- petitive market, the price may vary significantly. The actual price of an SREC during a trading peri- od can and will fluctuate depend- ing on supply and demand. This, of course, would make it equally valuable in the real world and even if Sun- Light paid the full moutly with the artificially inflated bonds, the ac- tual and real cost would be defied to the taxpayers.

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EDITORIAL: College undermines student success

S tudents at Mercer should not have to worry about their safety, should not have to think twice about providing personal information in order to enroll in classes. They should have confidence in the policies enacted by their institution, should trust their administration to follow the law. But it has become evident that we cannot rely on our college to provide us with such peace of mind.

The pages of this issue of The VOICE reveal a disturbing trend. Mercer’s administration is so dubiously mishandled, disorganized and incompetent that it is undermining student confidence — and thus success — at every turn. What exactly is undermining student confidence?

Among other things:

• Finding out our personal data isn’t secure.
• Learning of the college’s minimal compliance the Americans with Disabilities Act.
• Discovering that the college has positively flouted the law with its erroneous crime reports.

The people who are responsible for ensuring student safety go out of their way to make themselves unavailable for comment when our staff members come calling. The key administrators say “no comment” or insist that we have to talk to someone else.

Bryon Marshall, Director of College Safety, is never able to be reached for a comment. VOICE staffers have tried to reach him for comment on numerous articles and he hasn’t commented on one in over a year. Although he is the one with the law degree from Rutgers, held rather throw his security chief under the bus than be the one to answer questions about the college’s faulty crime reports.

Jose Fernandez, Executive Director for Compliance and Human Resources told us he wasn’t the one to ask about compliance with the Clery Act. What exactly does “Director of Compliance” mean?

While the college clearly cares nothing for actual matters of safety, much effort has put into measures to make the school appear safe and regulated.

Perhaps the most insulting method employed to demonstrate false security is the posters reminding us that “Stealing is a Crime” and littering is bad. But the most duplicitous way they cover the actual lack of safety is through the college’s visible ID tag policy which makes it mandatory for every student to wear their college issued ID card, with their name and student number clearly visible, at all times while on campus.

In the years since the policy was enacted The VOICE has run numerous articles examining every aspect of it.

We have explained that wearing your name visibly can attract unwanted attention from creepers who can look you up on Facebook.

We have pointed out that the only places where visible ID tags are required are secure facilities like prisons and military bases.

We have yearly ranted that the IDs do not contain keys and will not protect us in the event of a first person shooter incident on campus.

We have explained that in places where there have been shooters on campus, all of the shooters have had ID tags and wearing them visibly wouldn’t have protected anyone.

We have suggested that if we could load the cards with money for the cafeteria it would be more worth our while to carry them, but they still wouldn’t need to be kept visible.

We have pointed out that security can’t possibly check 9,000+ students’ ID tags and that creating such policies burdens security officers unnecessarily and ensures that enforcement is arbitrary at best.

Recently the college has run a graphic on its home page with a reminder about the ID policy with a picture an the phrase “ID’S PLEASE!” No one seems to have noticed or cared that this smacks of the infamous anti-immigration law of Arizona known as “Papers Please” which — not unlike Mercer’s policy — enables law enforcement to stop people and demand proof of citizenship. The similarities are appalling and uncanny.

We have researched and researched and researched to find out that no other public college in the United States has a visible ID policy.

The college has always maintained that the tags make us safer, but no administrator has ever been able to explain how this is so.

We believe, however, that the policy was originally enacted to have a convenient excuse for kicking loud and unruly students out of the student center. Just being loud is probably not enough to send you off campus, but not having your ID tag is under the terms of the policy.

The specifics of the visible ID policy can be found in the student handbook, which is only available on Mercer’s website. The 2012-2013 handbook is not yet available in print to students. There has been no discernible effort on the part of the administration to increase public knowledge of the rules and policies outlined in the new handbook. In fact, last semester Jose Fernandez told us the fine for violating the policy and his number didn’t match the handbook. When we pointed this out he would not clarify which number was correct.

All this paints a rather frightening portrait of a Kafkaesque institution where the only party privy to the exact wording of the various rules and policies is the one tasked with enforcing them.

The ID tags are a cover. They are a way of suggesting safety in a place where there isn’t any. They are a degrading measure enforced by an administration that is afraid of students and indifferent to their needs.

What do students actually need? We need to be confident that our administration is doing its job properly. Further, we need to be shown respect and given a better chance to succeed.

The college could demoralize a determination to stand behind student success by doing away with the visible ID policy and instead devoting itself to:

• Providing a full health center with a nurse and more than one school psychologist,
• Creating a less byzantine advising process,
• Improving parking,
• Providing greater transparency and information about school policies,
• Considering the enforceability and practicality of new policies

That would be a good start.

Write to The College VOICE!
Do you have something to say? The College VOICE accepts letters to the editor. Submission guidelines are printed in our policy manual at www.mcccvoice.org/about/policy-manual/#Letters_to_the_Editor

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write to: The College VOICE
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West Windsor, NJ 08550
ASK THE VOICE: GOOD ANSWERS TO TOUGH QUESTIONS

Classic Peanuts

Dear Voice,
I understand Mercer is running a study abroad trip to Amsterdam about sex and drugs. Does this signal a policy shift?

-420 PJDU

Dear VOICE,
We are not aware of any shift in Mercer’s staunch “No Fun” policy. We are not aware of any signal a policy shift?

Dear 420,
Sex and drugs. Does this trip to Amsterdam about running a study abroad I understand Mercer is

Dear Data Divulged,
Don’t be silly, if you are a Mercer student you don’t have any credit anyway.

Data Divulged

VOICE

HOROSCOPES

Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 19
There is something secret that you’ve barely allowed yourself to wish for, but desperately want it. It may be material or in the form of a relationship. Prospects are brightening for this development.

Aquarius
Jan. 20 - Feb. 18
Honor, nobility these are things you’ve always aspired to; you’ve always tried to do right, but you probably never knew it would be so thankless. Still, you are a hero to a few who really matter.

 Pisces
Feb. 19 - Mar. 20
Once a year you consider doing something radically different with what you diet and exercise regimen, but usually this bright idea hits you around January 1st. This year, try starting earlier.

Aries
Mar. 21 - Apr. 19
You’re sick of those “Keep calm and...” signs because keeping calm isn’t your strong suit. Fortunately you’ve arrived at a moment when being calm would be the worst decision possible. Lose it!

Leo
Jul. 23 - Aug. 22
Mechanical failures seem to abound. Although you’ve put it off and put it off, you will finally need to replace something you rely on. Take advantage of end of year financing options.

Taurus
Apr. 20 - May 20
You are always a good time and it is the time of year you try to get yourself invited to as many parties as possible: football nights, turkey feasts. This year why not throw one of your own?

Gemini
May 21 - Jun. 20
The good news is you don’t need to go see a doctor about that minor medical issue you’ve been worrying about. The bad news is the problem is serious, not the other thing. Time for a spa day

Cancer
Jun. 21 - Jul. 22
The universe is in general chaos around you. Fortunately you’re not losing your cool... yet, however, you are losing time and money. Think about getting a second job for the holidays.

Leo
Jan. 20 - Feb. 18
Once a year you consider doing something you’ve never even thought about. This year, try starting earlier.

Virgo
Aug. 23 - Sept. 22
As the weather cools and the evenings darken, so does your outlook on a particular friendship or association. Forgive yourself for needing your space. You are right, it is time to move on.

Libra
Sep. 23 - Oct. 22
What’s love got to do with it? Well, pretty much everything. Without the love and support of those near you, you have had to work doubly hard to find the will to work so hard. Finally the love will be returned ten fold.

Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
You may have been down on yourself lately (try always) but someone near you sees you for the amazing person you are. They may be too far to tell you, but they admire you more than you can imagine.

Sagittarius
Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
Ever thoughtful and conscientious you’ve reached the point where you really need to let yourself relax. It is okay to play hookey every once in a while. Preserve your sanity: take a day off.

2X DILBERT AND GET FUZZY