



## MVCC's Counselors - Helping Students Adjust, Cope and Succeed

### Getting The Word Out Is Critical

It might be the ball-point pen they hand out in the Counseling Center. Click it once, and a message on the barrel says **Personal Counseling**. Click it again, and the message is **Change of MAJOR**. Another click, and you read **Transfer Info**. Click again - the pen says **Career**

**Counseling**, followed by another click and **Vocational Counseling**. The final click sums it all up: **We're here to HELP**.

It might be the pads of post-it notes that say **We're here to help YOU**. Or the frisbees, the bulletin board displays or other novel ways of promoting their services.

Whatever it is that gets the message out, the people in MVCC's Counseling Center want you to know that they are here to help students with a myriad of issues that might impact their ability to succeed in college - and in life.

They also want you to help spread the word. They quickly point out that they cannot help the student who doesn't know the Center exists, or what services are available. They encourage all College employees to let them know when a student is experiencing difficulty, is not succeeding academically, is missing classes, or is having other problems.

The Counselors find it especially helpful when ED100 classes send students out on "scavenger hunts" to familiarize themselves with the campus and services available for students. They really enjoy guest speaking in these classes, as much as time and schedules allow.



### Who's Who in the Counseling Center

Led by Assistant Dean for Campus Life Rose Button, M.Ed., Counseling, St Lawrence University, the Counseling Center staff also includes full-time Counselors Maimun Khan, Ed.M., Counseling, Boston University and Jim Maio, M.S., Counseling Psychology, St. Bonaventure University, part-time

Counselor Mary Percacciante, M.S. Counseling Ed., Syracuse University and Senior Typist Joanna Clark. They also work with Virginia Pry of the Mohawk

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## OSSD, Learning Center Take Part in High School Transition Events for Students with Disabilities

Representatives of MVCC's Office for Services to Students with Disabilities along with the Learning Center recently took part in several special events for high school students with disabilities, and their families, as they prepare to enter college.

On Tuesday, April 27th, Lynn Igoe and Wendy Dowsland of OSSD, and Donna Sawyer White, Coordinator of Tutoring Services, participated in the "MOSTS Fair" (Moving On...Student Transition Services) at Rome Free Academy. They explained the types of services available at MVCC for students with disabilities.

Among other organizations represented were ARC of Oneida County, Central Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired, Central NY DSO, Family Advocacy Center, Human Technologies Corporation, Job Connections, Mental Health Connections, Pinnacle, Resource Center for Independent Living, Working Solutions, VESID, Utica College and HCCC.

On April 28th, a group of New Hartford students and staff visited the Utica Campus, meeting with an Admissions representative, taking a campus tour, having lunch in the snack bar and then meeting with Lynn Igoe and Wendy Dowsland of OSSD for a disabilities presentation.

Valley Council on Alcoholism/Addictions, and Dr. Matthew V. Russo, PhD., Psychology, Hofstra University, a psychologist, to assist students with specific needs.

They also partner on a regular basis with colleagues in Residence Life, the Health Center, Office for Services to Students with Disabilities, and with Vice President DiGiorgio and her assistant, Morris Pearson.

### **Making an Important Difference - One Student at a Time**

Counseling can make a major difference in a student's potential for success. It can help them understand their situation objectively and make informed decisions. It can help them understand why they feel the way they do and deal with that. Coming to college for the first time - leaving the "nest" and the comfort zone - can cause some long-standing personal problems come to the surface for some students. Personal relationships, past abusive situations, and eating disorders are some examples. Sometimes this happens simply because they no longer have the informal support group that helped them at home.

The Counselors are there for students, and the entire College community, in moments of crisis. Like all of us, they will not soon forget the experience of September 11th, 2001 - nor will the many people they helped that day.

Unfortunately, sometimes it means confirming bad news, and helping with that adjustment. This may include a role in disciplinary mediation.

They don't brag about their successes. If pressed, they may mention the student who nearly dropped out, or wanted to change their major without really thinking it through, even though they were close to graduation. They recall specific students who overcame enormous personal difficulties - even homelessness and depression - to complete their education and find personal and professional success. They've helped students deal with panic attacks, marital problems, stress and anger issues, difficulty in dealing with a new environment, roommate issues and many other challenges faced by students. On occasion, some "tough love" is what's needed; other times the students just need someone to listen, to help them deal with the personal discomfort that often comes with significant life changes. Sometimes, assistance is sought from one of many community agencies. Some problems develop suddenly, others evolve over years. Some can be overcome, others have to be managed.

### **Outreach Activities and Annual Events**

The Counseling staff also conducts biannual Transfer Days at which students can learn about four-year college options. There are wellness events, and alcohol awareness programs.

They help train RA's in the residence halls, visit ED100 classes, and participate in student orientation, covering important issues like sexual assault, dating violence, diversity -- before problems arise.



### **Suggestions are Welcome.**

They also welcome suggestions from the college community on new topics to be addressed; the most recent example is a new presentation for next falls incoming students on internet relationships.

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## **News from Administrative Services**

### **Vice President Ralph Feola**



### **Fire Inspections Completed**

The New York State Office of Fire Protection recently completed an inspection of both the Utica and Rome Campuses.

No problems were found during inspections of the residence halls on the Utica Campus. However, several problems were found and corrected in other campus buildings. The major problem was the use of electrical extension cords designed for residential use. These extension cords are not acceptable under codes covering public buildings on our campus, and also present fire and potential tripping risks.

### **Peace Officers**

Joe Palmer, Chief of Campus Safety & Security, continues to develop a plan for implementing peace officer status for selected members of the department. At the same time, the Board of Trustees will soon review proposed policies and procedures for campus peace officer operations.

Present plans call for two or three members of the department to receive training this year. A Peace Officers training program has been developed specifically for community colleges by the State University of New York, and has been approved by the Bureau of Municipal Police in Albany. SUNY plans to provide the training at HCCC, provided that the community colleges send at least 12 trainees.

### **Data Reporting**

The Registrar's Office staff has recently been involved in preparing reports on student attendance for

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## Counseling, cont.

### Recent Office Renovation

The Counseling Center staff is feeling upbeat about some recent renovations in their office area, particularly installation of a low wall and a wide counter surface making it easier to serve students with disabilities.

### An Empathy for Students as Individuals

What makes a good counselor, they say, is empathy... not only being able to help students but wanting to help, and having acquired the proper training, taking a genuine interest in personal outcomes. There are no universal counseling solutions, no counseling cookbooks. Every student, and his or her needs, presents a unique situation requiring a personalized approach.

Everyone at the College celebrates the success of students at Commencement -- no one more than the staff in the Counseling Center, perhaps because they know the struggles some students have faced in making it to that day, and what that Associate degree or certificate will really mean for those students' futures. Watch for the Counselors at graduation this year - they'll have some of the biggest grins of all!

### Where They're Located - and When They're There:

The Counseling Center is located in Payne Hall 104B, on the Utica Campus. They're open for business Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. You can reach them by phone at Extension 5326. They invite you to call or visit whenever they can assist you or one of our students.

Editor's Note: Counseling services are also available on the Rome Campus, but are organizationally separate from the Utica Campus Counseling Center. For information on the services at Rome, contact Paul Scanlon, Tom Salva or Robert Bronk.

### Quist To Attend Conference

Professor Beverly Quist of the Social Sciences Dept. will be attending the International Restorative Justice Association's 6th annual conference June 1-4 in Madison Wisconsin.

The theme revolves around how we can continue to "fight the good fight" in a world gone mad. Speakers will include survivors/analysts of the genocide in Rwanda, one of the primary researchers of the peace process in Northern Ireland, and a long-time anti-globalization activist.

The Association's annual Chomsky Award will go to Ed Chambers, long time community organizer and activist in Chicago and a colleague of Saul Alinsky.

Quist serves as the President of the Association.

### Svoboda Elected to State Respiratory Care Society For Full Six Year Term

Assistant Professor Charles Svoboda, Health Services Dept., was recently (January) elected by the NY State Society for Respiratory Care (NYSSRC) members to be President -- elect of the state society for 2004 to 2006; President of the NYSSRC from 2006 to 2008; Past-President to the NYSSRC from 2008 to 2010.

The New York State Society for Respiratory Care is a chartered affiliate of the national professional organization, the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC).

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## MVCC Students Elect 2004-2005 Officers

Students recently elected Student Congress Officers for the upcoming academic year. Andrew Dean of Westmoreland will serve as president, Jean Leandre of Spring Valley, NY, as vice president, and Douglas Koba of Munnsville as the student trustee.

Dean is a graduate of Westmoreland Central High School majoring in international studies at MVCC. He currently serves as the Student Congress program board director, as a resident assistant in the residence halls on the College's Utica Campus, and as managing editor of the Student Voice, the MVCC student newspaper.

Leandre will serve his second term as vice-president of the MVCC Student Congress. A graduate of Ramapo High School, he is president of the Black Student Union at MVCC. He is a Media Marketing and Communication major and plans to transfer after graduation to Northeastern University in Boston to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in business.

Koba is a graduate of the Stockbridge Valley Central School system, and is majoring in Air Conditioning Technology at MVCC. He worked for 18 years at Oneida Limited before returning to school.

### Linda Matthews to Retire

During the April Board of Trustees Meeting, the Trustees accepted with regret a letter of retirement from Linda Matthews Director, Academic Advisement & Student Service Center.

## From the desk of Virginia Pry Substance Abuse Coordinator

People with aggressive tendencies may be more likely to smoke and become addicted to nicotine.

Research led by the University of California at Irvine found that nicotine can trigger powerful bursts of activity in certain brain areas, but only in people who easily get angry. People with angry personalities become more aggressive with nicotine, but there was no effect on people who are more relaxed by nature.

## Upcoming Events

Wednesday, 5/5

Hospitality Dinner, theme- "Cinco de Mayo buffet" Seating begins at 5:45pm in AB 108, Rome Campus. Call 334-7702 for reservations.

Thursday, 5/6

Open Mic Night, 7:00pm, ACC 116.

Academic Honors Presentation, 3:00pm, Interlude, ACC 114.

Saturday, 5/8

Mychal R. Harris Memorial Scholarship dinner and fashion show, 4:00pm, Alumni College Center; fashion show, 6:00pm, IT Theater.

Tuesday, 5/11

Cultural Series Event: CONCERT: "Chulrua," 7:30pm, IT Theater. Admission is \$12.

Residence hall Ground Breaking Ceremony, 10:00am, Dorm Quad.

Wednesday, 5/12

TIAA Cref Representative, 8:00am-3:00pm, PH 104F.

## Teen Traffic Safety Event Draws Crowd

The 5th Annual Teen Traffic Safety Event held on campus April 27th-29th, concluded each day with a mock accident.



Several local agencies participated at the rescue of a two car apparent DWI related accident, held in the circle near Payne Hall.

A few MVCC students acted as victims of the accident. Over 600 local students participated in the event that was intended to educate teens about the effects of drunken driving.

Local agencies such as the Utica, New York Mills, Yorkville and New Hartford Police Departments; the Oneida County Sheriff and New York State Police, the Utica Fire Dept. and Kunkel Ambulance participated.

The event was sponsored by the Oneida County Stop DWI Program and MVCC. Stop DWI representatives Paul Oliver and Mike Colangelo, and MVCC's Cathy Hardy planned the event.



## News from Administrative Services, cont.

a national clearinghouse. The clearinghouse, in turn, provides this information, as required, to a variety of agencies and organizations involved in such matters as student loan repayment.

### Physical Plant Projects

Facilities & Operations is planning replacement of flooring in several smart classrooms in the Utica Campus Academic Building. The actual replacement work will take place during the summer. During the recent spring break, several more classrooms in the Academic Building were also converted into smart classrooms. The Board Room in Payne Hall was also equipped with smart classroom technology.

A water main behind the Alumni College Center, carrying water for fire fighting purposes, recently broke and had to be repaired. It seems likely that the break was caused by movement of shale in that part of campus. Similar problems were experienced campus wide before the completion of the most recent master plan renovation.

### Utility Rates Continue to be a Concern

Utility rates for gas and electricity continue to rise, in spite of efforts to limit their increase through consortium purchase of energy and a variety of conservation efforts. We will continue to monitor this situation and look for remedies.

## Mark Your Calendars

The new Residence Hall Ground Breaking Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, May 11th at 10:00am in the Residence Hall's center quad. Faculty and staff are welcomed to attend if your work schedule permits it.



This is a new billboard design which will begin appearing throughout Oneida County later this month, part of an advertising campaign targeting traditional students for fall enrollment. It will also appear on movie screens at Sangertown Square and Riverside Center. Related advertising will be heard periodically over the next few months on many of the area radio stations. A series of print ads has already begun appearing in the Rome Daily Sentinel and in the Tuesday "Career Builder" section of the Observer-Dispatch. Billboard and newspaper design was done by George Zook, photos by Sharon Zohne, both of the Public Information Office. Ad copy was prepared by Bob Lacell.