

MVCC Bios with Pictures PEAKS 2014-15

Janet Visalli



Hello, my name is Janet Visalli, Director of Adult Learner Services at Mohawk Valley Community College. I have worked at the college for over 21 years and have had different titles along the way. The one constant throughout my job responsibilities is that I have always worked with the adult learner in one capacity or another. Over the years I have learned a great deal about the dislocated worker population and funding sources available for retraining. Prior to coming to MVCC, I worked in different areas but once I found the educational environment I knew that was where I wanted to make a career.

Being married for 30 years, with two grown children, two grandchildren and two dogs, my family is my greatest treasure. Traditions are a big part of our heritage and family gatherings are filled with good food and many activities. When the children were younger our summers were spent at the ocean in Maine and that still is our favorite place to vacation. Since my son and his family live in Florida, I travel there as often as I can to see my grandchildren. When I am not visiting them, I utilize FaceTime! I am looking forward to this experience and getting to know everyone.

Rosemary Spetka



My name is Rosemary Spetka. I was born and raised in El Salvador, Central America. I lived in Los Angeles when I first came to the U.S. I worked at UCLA in various positions, but the last one was as an Administrative Analyst at the School of Medicine. After graduation, I moved to Utica NY but I was at stay at home mom until I went back to work in 1993 at SUNY Morrisville. I was the Assistant Director of Records and Registration and in 1994 I became the Registrar and Director of Records and Registration at Mohawk Valley Community College.

What I like about working at MVCC are the people, who in many ways are like a family. I like helping students and seeing them walk through the stage at commencement. One good story about a student makes up for all the stressful days at work.

I like to learn almost anything. I spend my time away from work sharing time with my kids and friends. I have a son and two daughters. I attended my youngest daughter's college graduation ceremony this past May. I like to meet new people and make friends with people from different backgrounds and cultures because I learn about their culture while I have a good time sharing mine. I enjoy traveling, reading, dancing, listening to music, watching documentaries, making jewelry and being creative. I volunteer at a Thrift store and count my blessings every time I finish my time there.

Franca Armstrong

Hi! I'm Franca Armstrong, Associate Vice President of Workforce Development and Dean of the Rome Campus. I have worked for Mohawk Valley Community College



for 14 years mainly in the Continuing Education Division. I have especially enjoyed the work with programs that help individuals take that step into continuing their education, which can range from a short term training course to a 2 year degree.

The roots of my work started at an anti-poverty agency and I have spent my life trying to help people connect the fact that education is the only route out of poverty. I enjoy working with the Community and seeing real change for the better due to work that the College is involved in. I have been married to my husband Steve for 17 years and we have 2 children, Steven 12 and Arianna 10. We love to travel and my husband and I have collected autographs as a hobby for the past 20 years. I'm looking forward to meeting each of you and going through the PEAKS experience.

David Amico



Hi, my name is David Amico. I am the current Executive Director of Public Safety and Emergency Management at MVCC. I have held that position for just over a year. Before coming to MVCC, I was the Chief of Police for Cazenovia, NY. After retiring in 2010, I began teaching criminal justice at Morrisville State College and was the Director of Police Phase 1 Certification program for Cazenovia College. I have also been involved in police training and education for approximately fifteen years. I am still employed as a part time police officer in an area police department.

My wife and I enjoy the small town, country life of the Cazenovia area. We enjoy our "gentlemen's farm" with our horse, goats, dog and cat. I enjoy going to work,

doing things with my wife, working outside, weightlifting and music. I am looking forward to meeting everyone.

Deanna Ferro-Aurience



Deanna Ferro-Aurience joined Mohawk Valley Community College in November 2006 as the Events Coordinator for Institutional Advancement, and was promoted to the Director of Donor and Resource Development in the October of 2010. In her current position, Deanna plays a strategic role in the coordination of the College's first-ever \$7M comprehensive major gifts campaign, the research and coordination grant funding, and the College's planned giving program. In addition to her fundraising efforts, Deanna is responsible for the coordination of Team MVCC's participation in local community events, as well and the planning of multiple MVCC Foundation events year round.

Deanna is married to her husband Anthony D. Aurience who is a Patrol Officer for the Utica Police Department. They live in Utica, NY with their Boston Terrier named Snooks. In her spare time, Deanna enjoys running, biking and cross country skiing, and participates in multiple road races throughout the year. Deanna loves to plans parties, and often entertains family and friends at her home throughout the year.

Richard Haubert



I am Rich Haubert and I am entering my ninth year at Mohawk Valley Community College in the Marketing and Communication Office. Prior to coming to the College, I spent 19 years working in the field of print media. Having worked as a writer, editor, photographer, graphic designer, toilet bowl washer and also picking up lunch for everyone in the newsroom, I have found a very enjoyable home at MVCC. While my job description is that of media contact and writer, I have become a jack of all trades as I oversee the College's main website, the athletic website, double as an SID, sign designer and printer, publication director, and just about anything else. But alas, I view this as job security. :-D

Outside the office I enjoy belonging to a dance club with my girlfriend, which gets us out of the house. We have four kids – two each – and we are looking forward to helping them head out into the world.

While working on our house can be considered a hobby, my real hobby is that of Legos. Yes – Legos. Our Christmas train layout is made up completely of Lego buildings, vehicles, train engines and cars, and most of all – mini-figure people.

Seyed Akhavi



Hi, I am Seyed Akhavi. I have been faculty for three years, director for 11 years, and dean for 15 years. My research area is factors contributing to the success of female students in STEM. I am currently the Dean of the STEM Center at Mohawk Valley Community College.

I like history, played and coached soccer. As an engineer, I enjoy making improvements and finding better ways of doing things. I am looking forward to learning from my colleagues and improving my way of thinking and working.

Troy Little



My name is Troy Little. I am the Director of Law Enforcement Programs at MVCC. My major responsibility is operating the colleges Pre-Employment Police Training program and developing other programs to serve the criminal justice community. Prior to accepting this position, I was a member of the New York State Police for 22 years. I am currently a second year PHD student in sociology at the University of Albany and anticipate completing my degree in the next three years. I enjoy helping, guiding and mentoring kids and young adults. I am married with four children (two of which we adopted out of foster care). We are foster parents and I am the President of Whitestown Pop Warner. I am a Pittsburgh Steelers fan and travel to Pittsburgh once

or twice a year to watch them play.

David R. Katz, III



Hi all, I'm David R. Katz III, Professor of Political Science and now the Executive Director of Organizational Development at Mohawk Valley Community College. I was in college classrooms for 32 years teaching just about every conceivable higher education cohort there is, from adult learners to traditional college students, athletes in intercollegiate competition, and inmates within New York State correctional facilities. I have coached basketball on the varsity high school, NJCAA Div. III, and NCAA Div. III levels, and I've also taught Social/Ballroom dancing professionally. I spent college summers as a life guard and Red Cross Swimming Instructor. Teaching, coaching and mentoring is my lifework.

Outside of work I am an endurance athlete who enjoys running, biking, cross country skiing, hiking, mountaineering and fly fishing for trout in pristine back country mountain streams. I love spending time with my wife Marilyn, my two dogs, and my three grown children when they come for a visit! I am truly psyched about this whole PEAKS experience and getting to know everyone!