

MVCC Bios with Pictures PEAKS 2016-17

Stephanie Verostek



Hello, my name is Stephanie Verostek, and I am the Director of Campus Services on the Rome branch campus of Mohawk Valley Community College. I began my career as a secretary at MVCC in 1985 and have held different titles throughout the years, culminating in this position which I accepted in 2009. The Student Services Center on the branch campus is a bit unique because we are a “one-stop” shop in which a student has one point of contact for their admissions intake interview all the way through graduation. Our enrollment is smaller than the main campus, therefore we know most all the students by name, which I love! I truly believe in the Community College and the hope it offers to so many who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend college.

Outside of work, I love antiquing, reading, and spending time with family and friends. I grew up in Rome, have been married to my husband Mike for 24 years, have one amazing son, Michael Jr., and two fur babies – our dogs Bailey and Boris. We spend our time between our 200-year-old restored farmhouse in Rome, NY and our home in Murrells Inlet, SC. My husband and son love to golf and I love the ocean and the beach, so it works out perfectly! I look forward to meeting all of you and attending the PEAKS program throughout the coming year!

Joe Woodrow

Hi, I am Joe Woodrow, Associate Professor of Biology and Associate Dean for Math and



Life Science at MVCC. I was raised on a dairy farm not far from Utica. I got my start in higher education at Suffolk Community College and subsequently Finger Lakes Community College. The community college experience was a very important part of my future educational success, both at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and eventually, the University of Hawaii, where I earned my Ph.D.

Before coming to MVCC, I worked as a civilian Medical Entomologist for the U.S. Army and then a researcher at the University of Hawaii. I started at MVCC in 2008 as an adjunct instructor of Biology. I am active in the community as a member of the Lions Club, Sons of the American Legion and Councilman for the Town of Richfield. I enjoy being in the outdoors, particularly hiking and kayaking. I look forward to

meeting you all as we meet the challenges of the PEAKS experience.

Jean Leandre



Hello, my name Jean Leandre. I am the Director of Student Engagement and Outreach at MVCC. In this hybrid role, I work with students to grow and strengthen campus and community experiences by encouraging and developing participation in clubs, organizations and student government. I serve as the primary liaison with high schools in Oneida and Madison County who participate in the College Connection and Magnet Bridge programs and direct the planning and implementation of college outreach efforts by coordinating activities with area schools and community-based organizations. In addition, I have the privilege of managing the program activities and the staff of the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) and Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) programs.

I am blessed because on a daily basis I have an opportunity to work and play at the place that I admire the most and I get compensated for it; imagine that. I am looking forward to the PEAKS program, specifically, the opportunity to share and develop progressive ideas on student development and engagement; become more familiar with a variety of personal, team and institutional leadership best practices; and last but not least, obtain perspective and advice from professionals across all division of Higher Ed.

Being back in the Mohawk Valley area is exciting because it is so diverse and full of energy. Having lived and worked in Haiti, New York City and Spring Valley NY, it's very refreshing to be back in Utica and have an opportunity to enjoy all that it has to offer.

Michael McHarris



Hi everyone, my name is Michael McHarris, I am the Director of Facilities & Operations at Mohawk Valley Community College. I began my career as the Assistant Director of Facilities & Operations in January 2001 and have been the Director since September 2011. I also get the opportunity to adjunct two different courses in the evening which alternate every semester (Construction Estimating and Construction Blue Print Reading). My background is in the Construction Management/Estimating field in which I have sixteen plus years' experience. This has proven to be a tremendous asset during all the construction the College has been undertaking on both the Utica and Rome Campuses.

Outside of work I have had the opportunity to coach many youth sports through the years while my son Jake has been growing up. I have coached soccer, baseball, football, and most importantly hockey! I

also continue to play in a senior hockey league in Clinton. I enjoy most outdoor activities including snowmobiling, hunting, and fishing, but my favorite activity is being able to walk my golden retriever Jovi with my wife of 28 years Cindy.

I am truly excited to be a part of the PEAKS program and meeting everyone!!!

Dianne Head

Hello, my name is Dianne Head, Payroll Manager within the Business Office here at Mohawk Valley Community College. I am grateful to be a part of MVCC since December of 2013 and have been enjoying every minute of it. My higher education experience



includes being Payroll Manager at Colgate University and Human Resources Assistant at Cazenovia College. I also spent a year working in the private sector as Payroll Supervisor for Chobani, Inc. as well as processing payroll for Oneida County's department of Audit & Control early in my career. I thoroughly enjoy the niche of payroll administration as it gives me the opportunity to connect with students and employees on many levels each and every day.

I am originally from an old steel town of Sharon, Pennsylvania which is about an hour north of Pittsburgh. I am the youngest of 13 children.... 9 brothers and 3 sisters. I received my Associate's degree in Business Administration from Penn State University and then ended up in Utica on a whim. I have lived in central New York for nearly 25 years after "visiting" my brother for one summer. My brother was instrumental in giving me the opportunity to work my way through the completion of my Bachelor's degree in Business Administration by enrolling in Utica College's evening Continuing Education program. I was able to work full time for Oneida County during the day while attending full time evening classes. I am the third out of 13 children in my family to earn a Bachelor's degree. I am presently pursuing my Payroll Professional Certification through the American Payroll Association.

Outside of work, I truly enjoy being a mom to my three teenage daughters, Molly (16) and twins Natalie & Jenna (14). My daughters and I also share our rural home with the rest of our four legged family members. Our crew consists of three rescue horses named Duffy, Ginger and Patches, our cat Bella and three dogs named Baby, Duke and Chevy. Chevy is the newest addition to our family as he is an eight pound Pomeranian puppy who thinks he is quite the ferocious beast.

I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the PEAKS Leadership program and am truly excited to be a part of this experience.

Nancy Wallace



Hello, I'm Nancy Wallace and I've been MVCC's Associate Director of Human Resources since August 2014. I've worked in higher education for over 15 years and the last eight have been in human resources. Prior to higher education, I worked for a local telecommunications company in the accounting and customer service departments. While my undergraduate degrees are in accounting, I completed an MBA in technology management with a concentration in human resources. I was born and raised in the Mohawk Valley and am the youngest of four girls.

Outside of work, I like to spend time with my family and friends – shopping, making jewelry, or attending sporting events. My husband Jim and I enjoy vacationing in the Cape and spring training in Florida – go Sox! We like to play golf or go to the driving range. Jim is very patient with me - because I need a lot of practice. I'm looking forward to the PEAKS program and expanding my network of colleagues.

David R. Katz, III



Hi all, I'm David R. Katz III, Professor of Political Science and currently 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 three dogs, and my three grown children when they come for a visit! I am truly excited about this whole PEAKS experience and really enjoy getting to know everyone!