Tuition Hikes Likely Next Fall Semester

By Emelyne Smith
News Editor

Students at Mercer County Community College appear likely to see a 10 percent increase in tuition next fall as a result of the state's proposed $9.5 million cut in state funding for higher education in the county. Acting President Thomas Willfrid said the college would have to turn to the tuition hikes next year from the total $163 million allotted for Mercer County Community College with Campus Car Break-In.

Love CSI? Then you'll love MCCC's new forensics course

By Maria Koehler
News Editor

Since we can’t meet expenses next year from the state’s $4.5 billion budget to higher education amountgap.Corrine’s proposed cuts to higher education amount to $69 million, leaving around $1.9 billion for college funding. State funding for public colleges like MCCC would be slashed by 10 percent. "Since we can’t meet expenses next year from the state, we must turn to the county, and then to tuition," Acting President Thomas Willfrid said.

The rays of the noon sun fell ominously upon the crowded courtyard of Mercer County Community College’s West Windsor campus on the great day of March 30, 2006. Many students stood locked in casual conversation, oblivious of what was about to occur.

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

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

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

"I turned quickly to shoot the perpetrator’s license plate number to West Windsor police. The police, who did not have an available officer to come to campus immediately, then called MCCC, said Ed Dill, head of facilities, the college’s security supervisor. The witness’s vehicle description prompted patrolmen Pete Hanne to stop Days later that afternoon when he was giving his girlfriend a ride back to the West Windsor campus, Marx said. Hanne found the stolen equipment in the car’s back seat, Marx said.

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

If Days is convicted, he will face student discipline. If he has a police record, he could go to jail, while otherwise he might pay fines, McCormick said.

The Honda’s driver, who requested anonymity, said the theft left him "very disappointed and devastated." Mike Dill, head of facilities, said that special MCCC patrols in golf carts routinely check the parking lots, but "you can't cover every inch of this campus, oblivious of what was about to occur.

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"We ended up in this situation, you might wonder? To answer that question, one must first ask how this video-game-sprung-to-life came to be.

"We wanted to show people that we are more then just a bunch of nerds sitting in a dark room watching movies," said Kate Skalka, secretary and “den mother” of the Japanese Anime and Manga (iAM) club, which hosted the event. "I read on the Internet about a live Pac-Man event run by New York University called Pacmanhattan,” Skalka said. "I wondered, why not bring this to the Mercer campus?"

Being the visionaries they are, the JAM club then constructed a blueprint of how the game would be played. "Running through each path of the campus would earn the Pac-Man points,” Liam Surry, JAM president, explained. “The goal would be for Pac-Man to collect as many points as possible while not being touched by the ghosts.”

Similar to the real game, Surry said, "At the four corners of the campus stood Con't PAC-MANIA, P3
Mercer Moves Ahead with 14-Week Semester Schedule

By Arthur Iurilli
Staff Writer

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

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

The forum passed the resolution 14-13, with a late-arriving member and committee Chair Amy Vondrak casting the deciding votes in favor. Vondrak later noted that she was not “advoc- sory, not decisive,” and that administrators could do what they decided was best.

Earlier last month the forum had voted overwhelmingly to approve a 15-week semester for 2007. That schedule would eliminate the existing finals week, which occurs after 15 weeks of classes.

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

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

“I would say that ‘goal remains a good word’ to describe implementing the 14-week plan by 2007,” McCormick said. “There are workload implications for a shortened schedule. Some programs in which students must meet state licensing exams, such as nursing or funeral service, may have to stay on existing schedules.”

Professor Cassie Cooley of ConY SEMESTER, P4

Hiring of Contract Negotiator Troubles Faculty Members

By Scott Schendlinger
Staff Writer

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

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

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

Wilfrid and Eric Perkins, former vice president for administration, handled the negotiations when the facul- ty’s previous contract expired three years ago. But Wilfrid’s position was cut in 2003 while performing the duty again, the president said.

Instead, Reilly has been hired to represent the college board of trustees at the bargaining table for all five con- tracts. Wilfrid said there will be nothing new about the process. He described Reilly, who has been hired on a part-time basis, as “well-qualified.”

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

“I anticipate little difficul- ty in finding an agreement,” Wilfrid said, adding that he believes that the college and faculty “need to find a fair settlement for both the stake- holders and the workers.”

Pugh said that his main goal is a fair contract.

“The key word is fair. As long as it is fair for both par- ties, everyone should be happy,” said Pugh, acknowl- edging that New Jersey’s cur- rent budget crisis might have an impact on negotiations.

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

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

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

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

“I don’t know any good faculty that wants a strike,” he said.

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

Although the faculty con- tracts expire June 30, no deadline exists for new con- tracts to be signed. Negotiations will commence after the faculty union makes its requests to board repre- sentatives.

“Student Handbook Under Renovation

By Peter J. Fesmire
Staff Writer

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

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

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

The effort is also aimed at helping faculty understand the procedures for handling an academic integrity viola- tion. The revision would allow faculty to more easily deal with policy violations and lighten their load, Coenen said.

“What we are doing is to ensure that students and faculty are not wasting their time” dealing with academic integrity violations, the histo- ry professor said.

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

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

The Faculty Forum met March 31 to discuss the pro- posed changes but post- poned voting on the final version until April 27.

MCCC To Offer CSI-like Science Course

By William Carr
Staff Writer

It’s not exactly “CSI,” but this fall, Mercer County Community College will begin offering students an alternative to standard sci- ence courses that will feature forensics investigation.

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

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

The course will be based around solving mysteries, with forensics evidence play- ing a large part in the course, Blinderman said. Students will examine such evidence as blood spots, powder evidence and hair samples to come up with a solution to a mystery.

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

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

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

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Peers Consider Tennis Coach ‘A Legend’

By Esther Mills
Managing Editor

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

“When I say he is a legend, I am not just the head assistant athletic director, the long-time Mercer soccer coach and pro soccer player,” Dlugosz himself said. “It still plays competitive senior tennis nationally. But competition for Dlugosz does not stop with his peer group.

“I play and hit with all my players,” he said. “I can’t beat my first stop.”

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

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

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

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

Upon graduation in 1962, Dlugosz had a slew of job offers and decided to take a job at what was then Trenton Junior College. Since then, through its name change to MCCC in 1966 – the college has given Dlugosz a platform for his love of sports.

He started the soccer program in 1962, and from 1963 to 1982 his teams were regional champs 12 times. The Vikings won six straight Garden State Athletic Conference titles, from 1968 to 1973. He was Region XIX coach of the year six times between 1967 and 1974, and was the New Jersey Coaches’ Coach of the Year in 1968.

In all, Dlugosz compiled a 183-28-3 record during his 20-year soccer career, or a mark that no one else said speaks for itself. In 1992 he was inducted into the National Junior College Soccer Coaches Hall of Fame.

But his success in the soccer world wasn’t limited to coaching. Dlugosz played professionally in the United League of Philadelphia, where he helped VE Erzgebirge win five league titles in seven years, including four straight from 1967-71. He toured in 1964 with a United League all-star team in Germany, France and Switzerland. He also played professionally with the Philadelphia Ukrainians Nationals for three years and helped the team win the U.S. Open Challenge Cup in 1960 and ’61.

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

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

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

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

“With many seniors having to juggle work and school off for financial aid. Wilfrid said that he and school officials are currently meeting to discuss how to best serve students in this category, adding that the MCCC Foundation is a growing source of scholarships for students with financial needs.

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

“It’s worth it to raise tuition in order to keep the college vital at a time when the state faces a budget crisis,” said Wilfrid. “If you look at the cost of tuition at Mercer, it’s a great bargain compared to the potential value of a college education.”

The tuition increase and the college’s 2007 budget will be addressed at the April 20 board of trustees meeting. Wilfrid said he would organize a public hearing about tuition hikes before that date.

State legislators could restore some higher ed funding cuts in the state’s final budget, which under the New Jersey constitution is to be implemented by June 30. The New Jersey Council of Community Colleges is lobbying lawmakers to lighten the impact on New Jersey’s two-year schools.

PAC-MANIA

Con’t from P1

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

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

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

Others were confused. Seeing the ponchos, student Molly Ahearn wondered, “Is it about to rain? Do they know something I don’t?” Are they meteorologists?

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

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

This reporter, a heavy smoker for six years, can attest to the exhaustion. The campus doesn’t seem large until you find yourself sprinting from end to end, trying to tackle someone in a yellow poncho adorned with felt eyes.

Despite the detractors, the event went off without a hitch, so much so that the JAM club intends to make it a monthly event during the spring and fall semesters, granting good weather.

Until then, make sure to kick your smoking habit and start running two miles a day.
**Mercer Baseball Struggling to Improve**

*By Chris McGloin*

The Mercer Vikings baseball team has endured a tough run in league play after returning from spring break with high expectations following a successful non-conference schedule. The team's initial tally of the closed ballot raised hackles between noon and 1:30 p.m., a period of Morris, 9-2 and 7-4.

**Semester Con’t from P2**

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

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

John Santosouso, coordinator of engineering technology, said he was troubled both by the proposed sched-
ule change and the FFTL vote.

By Dan Mattonelli, a sophomore transfer leadoff hitter. After the Brookdale game he was batting .481 with 23 runs batted in after 41 at-bats. The Vikings have five players batting over .300, though they don’t pack much slugging power with only four home runs through the first 24 games. The team makes up for this deficit with excellent team speed and a knack for manufacturing runs by playing small ball. Mattonelli said some players are still adjusting to college baseball.

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

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

McCormick praised faculty members for conducting “principled, colle-
giate discussions without finger-point-
ing.”

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

The team’s offense is led by Dan Mattonelli, a sophomore transfer leadoff hitter. After the Brookdale game he was batting .481 with 23 runs batted in after 41 at-bats. The Vikings have five players batting over .300, though they don’t pack much slugging power with only four home runs through the first 24 games. The team makes up for this deficit with excellent team speed and a knack for manufacturing runs by playing small ball. Mattonelli said some players are still adjusting to college baseball.

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According to Wolski, the only thing keeping the Vikings from being a champi-
onship-caliber team is a lack of experience on the defen-
sive side of the ball. Almost half the team, including two of the three starting pitchers, are freshmen. But Mattonelli said the team has a successful offense.

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

When the Vikings find themselves in low-scor-
ing defensive struggles, their surprisingly effective pitching staff is often up to the chal-
lenge but can have problems winning close games. Despite the short-
cornings, Wolski believes that the team’s obsessive work ethic and high level of team chemistry are the beginnings of long-term suc-
cess.

“Our guys treat base-
ball as a lifestyle, but they also spend a lot of time together away from the game as well,” the coach said. “We’re hoping that the pro-
gram will be such that is not only a success, but fun to be a part of.”

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THE COLLEGE VOICE

Covering the Vikings of Mercer County Community College

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