Mercer and Bucks County Colleges Sign Unique Program-Sharing Agreement

Mercer and Bucks County Community Colleges have approved a program-sharing agreement that enables students to take advantage of academic programs not offered at their home schools. A Bucks student interested in Aviation Flight Technology, or eleven other Mercer associate degree majors not offered at Bucks, can now pursue the degree at Mercer. The tuition rate will be the same as charged to out-of-county New Jersey residents instead of the higher rates charged to out-of-state residents. Students will be able to take required liberal arts or elective courses at their home school and then transfer credits to Bucks or Mercer to take the other requirements for their major.

MCCC President Dr. Robert Rose, left, and Bucks President Dr. James Linksz recently signed an agreement at Trenton-Mercer Airport that will make programs such as Mercer’s Aviation Flight Technology available to Bucks County, PA, students at the in-state tuition rate.

Honors Graduate Overcomes Visual Handicap, Speaks at MCCC Commencement

Jean Wallenstein Milfort will enter Rutgers College of Rutgers University this fall to study foreign languages, with the goal of becoming a teacher. Although music would be his first career choice, reading the small black notes on the page has become too difficult for him. Now legally blind, the 25-year-old honors graduate delivered the student address at commencement on May 30.

Milfort expressed gratitude to MCCC for helping him achieve his goals. “This institution shines above Mercer County,” he said. Some of his comments drew cheers. “Don’t use your college degree, your skills and confidence to put down a fellow. Rather use them to help others,” he said.

While at Mercer, Milfort managed his academic load with the help of an electronic notebook and magnifying software. He offers high praise for Mercer’s Office of Special Services, staffed with specialists and equipment designed to assist students with disabilities. At a recent conference for 300 high school students with disabilities held on Mercer’s campus, Milfort gave a moving and inspiring speech about how Mercer can help them pursue their education. “I told them not to worry because there are people at Mercer who will help them,” he said.

Milfort, who was born in Haiti, studies German, French, Spanish, and English in addition to his native Creole. Very active at Mercer, Milfort was secretary of the Educational Opportunity Fund Club, a DJ on the college radio station and a member of the Jazz Band. He was inducted into the Spanish honor society and included in Who’s Who in Community Colleges. At his church Milfort is a pianist and organizes the youth choir.

According to Spanish Professor Steven Richman “Jean stands out among all the students of recent years…He compensates for poor vision by means of extreme diligence.” Milfort says he doesn’t dwell on his vision. “Whatever you say, I see it in my mind…I don’t worry about it. As long as God gives me a way to deal with it, I am fine.”
Dee Rosebrock to Manage New Corporate Conference Center

Mercer’s Corporate Conference Center, to be completed in the fall of 2002, has an able and enthusiastic new manager, Dee Rosebrock. The center will be a state-of-the-art meeting and training facility with outstanding customer service,” said Rosebrock. “And we will draw on the expertise of Mercer’s corporate training staff to develop customized programs for our clients.”

Prior to her appointment at Mercer, Rosebrock was assistant general manager of the Chauncey Conference Center in Princeton, where she directed a staff of 11. She spent nine years as director of the JFK Conference Center in Edison, establishing the center from the ground up and managing a large number of annual events.

“My background fits my current position perfectly,” commented Rosebrock, who is a certified meeting professional. “I’ve been on both sides of the industry – developing training programs and supporting the actual events. I have a proactive approach and try to anticipate clients’ needs before they even ask. I enjoy serving people.”

Rosebrock also believes in a team approach. “It’s important to empower the staff so that they come to feel like champions for a given client. We intend to develop a long list of repeat customers.”

While Mercer’s new center will be competing with other conference facilities in the area, Rosebrock is firmly convinced that it will succeed. “We plan to make customer service our top priority and to be our clients’ sole source for both training and quality meeting space.” Rosebrock predicts that the majority of clients will be corporations, professional organizations, community-based organizations, and county and state government. There will be rentals for private functions as space allows.

Hard-hat tours of the conference center will begin in July, 2002, with occupancy scheduled for the fall. Bookings are being taken now for the January 2003 opening.

Among the center’s facilities are: a 219-seat, multi-media conference-style auditorium; a large, flexible seating, multi-purpose conference room; five computer labs; five conference-style rooms; and breakout rooms. Architects for the project are Fairidy Veisz Fraytak, P.C. of Trenton and GBQC of Philadelphia.

For more information contact Dee Rosebrock at (609) 586-4800, ext. 3269, or visit Mercer’s website at www.mccc.edu.

Yardville National Bank First to Sponsor Conference Center

Yardville National Bank (YNB) has announced its sponsorship of the foyer in Mercer’s new Corporate Conference Center, taking the first major naming opportunity. “We are happy to support Mercer, an innovative community college that provides for the educational needs of our workforce,” said Bank President Patrick Ryan.

According to YNB’s Chief Operating Officer, Timothy J. Losch, who serves as president of MCCC’s Foundation Board, “MCCC is a vital community resource and as such, we want to make sure it is kept strong.” To learn more about naming opportunities at Mercer’s sophisticated new center, call Dean for College Advancement Bill Mate at (609) 586-4800 ext. 3601.

Businesses Eligible for Free Training

Mercer’s Center for Training and Development (CTD) is offering area companies a sweet deal. Through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor’s Literacy Training Program, employers can obtain training for their employees in English as a second language, math on the job, computer literacy, improving communication, decision making, blueprint reading, team building, and conflict resolution. The program is open to businesses large and small.

The Department of Labor will provide companies with grants up to $50,000 to upgrade their employees’ basic skills. According to CTD Director Nunzio Cernero, Mercer will do the rest. “Once a company contacts us and describes its training needs, we will prepare the application, provide the training services and complete all reports required by the State,” said Cernero. Depending on the size and facilities of the company, training may take place on site or on Mercer’s West Windsor Campus.

Under the requirements of the grant, the Department of Labor pays for instruction and books while companies continue to pay employee salaries during training. Companies must ensure that appropriate workers are targeted for training and attend classes as assigned. All training must be completed within one year after the grant is signed.

For more information, contact Nunzio Cernero at (609) 586-4800, ext. 3279, or email nunz@mccc.edu.

Championship Flight Team Takes to the Air in Ohio

In April competition at Trenton-Mercer Airport, MCCC’s Flight Team qualified for the National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) “Safecon” championships in Columbus, Ohio, this May. The Vikings qualified by placing second overall in the Northeast Region VII finals, where they competed against four-year colleges. Coordinators were MCCC Teaching Assistant Diane Loving and Professor Joan Jones, with flight program coordinator Professor Joseph Blasenstein. The winning team was from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, NY.

Individuals competed for awards in ten separate ground and flying events, and team prizes were given in three categories: ground events, flying events and safety. Mercer’s team, coached by Professor Jones, placed first in the flying events category, while RPI won the ground events, and Dowling College (Long Island, NY) earned the safety award.

Judges observed the entire competition, including how students worked with the planes, their safety procedures and the communication coordination of the team members. “The most coveted award is the safety award,” Jones said. The competition was rescheduled from the fall because of September terrorism, Jones said.

Mercer County Community College’s Flight Team. From left, standing, are Greg Evans, Sean Snead, Brian Olsen, Team Captain Professor Joan Jones and Jonathan Turman. In front are Hector Flores and Marcin Korona.
While the Kerney campus teaches an invaluable role for the county and state, Mercer plays an essential role in Trenton’s community. With the serious shortage of radiography technicians facing the region, the Medical Center at Princeton to Award Scholarships to MCCC Radiography Students.

A community is only as strong as the sum of its parts. In downtown Trenton, one of those parts is Mercer’s James Kerney Campus (JKC) at North Broad and Academy Streets. “We are stakeholders in Trenton’s future,” said Dr. Beverly Richardson, JKC Provost since 1986. “This campus is a pillar of Trenton, a permanent institution that strengthens the surrounding community.”

Kerney shares this role with other organizations in the Old Trenton Neighborhood, as the JKC area is known, including the YWCA, the Trenton City Library, the Latino Land Trust, Isles, Inc., and others. “Mercer is part of a neighborhood. The new Marriott Hotel is right up the street. Five or six new restaurants have opened in the area in the last two years. There are four churches within minutes,” said Richardson.

The local community embraces Kerney’s presence. At a recent breakfast of 65 community leaders hosted by Mercer, the discussion emphasized the power of education to transform the city. Among the group’s suggestions were expanding degree and career training programs at JKC, developing stronger partnerships with area churches and libraries, and increasing JKC’s lunchtime offerings.

Programs for “Nontraditional” Students
In addition to its role as a good neighbor in Trenton, Mercer plays an invaluable role for the county and state. While the Kerney campus teaches traditional students – those who come from high school seeking their associate degree or career certificate – its unique mission is to provide a helping hand to “nontraditional” students.

According to Richardson, Kerney now serves over 1,000 of these students annually with academic enrichment programs including adult basic education, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, and bilingual instruction. “The enrollment is up,” she said. “Many students are referred to JKC either through the city, county or state, or Trenton area organizations. We have the programs they need.”

Two federally-funded training programs prepare students for the workforce: the Career Training Institute (CTI), under coordinator Robert Estok, and the Workforce Readiness Program under Delores Eleazer. Those who are enrolled in CTI can pursue either Office Automation or Culinary Technology. According to Estok, 128 people have been served through CTI since September. “There is open entry. There are always some students starting and some finishing up.” The majority of students opt for Office Automation, typically remaining in the program for nine months.

Workforce Readiness is the first step for adult clients who must refocus and redirect their careers. “We take a holistic approach,” said Eleazer. “We look at where the students are when they come to us and where they need to go. We offer career counseling and teach job search and job readiness skills, including how to get a job and how to keep it.” Monthly seminars feature topics such as dressing for success, physical fitness, stress reduction, family planning, interviewing, housing, and 401K plans. The program has served 140 clients since September.

After completing the Workforce Readiness program, clients are referred to a job, where they are tracked for 90 days after placement, or to the CTI at Mercer. “We work directly with the New Jersey Department of Social Services and the Department of Labor,” said Eleazer. “We are connected with 60 to 80 agencies. These students have access to a real network through us.” The Career Training Institute reports a 95% job placement rate for its grads. “Even in a slow economy, there are still clerical and administrative positions,” said Estok. He recalls a recent grad who is currently earning $30,000 as a medical coding and billing clerk at Capital Health Systems; another has been hired in events planning at the Trenton Marriott. “We have great contacts with staffing agencies,” he said. “Even short-term positions are a way to get in the door. Sometimes our former students hire our current graduates. A student who graduated four years ago is now an office manager looking to hire.”

The Medical Center at Princeton to Award Scholarships to MCCC Radiography Students

With the serious shortage of radiography technicians facing the region, the Medical Center at Princeton to Award Scholarships to MCCC Radiography Students.

The College of New Jersey and the Medical Center at Princeton announced an agreement to address the need. Students who commit to working at the hospital after graduation will be eligible for scholarships from the Medical Center.

Six students per semester may receive the scholarships, which the Medical Center awarded to cover tuition for up to 18 months of study. Scholarship winners would agree to employment at Princeton for the same length of time as the scholarship. For example, if the scholarship covers one year of study, the student agrees to work at Princeton for one year. Students who have completed at least one full semester in the professional phase of the radiography program may apply.

Employment opportunities in the field are booming and are projected to grow through 2006. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, six of the country’s fastest growing occupations are in the allied health fields. Average annual starting salaries are in the $36,000 to $41,000 range. Students in Mercer’s associate degree program combine studies in general education and radiography with supervised clinical experience in area hospitals. Graduates are employed at hospitals, clinics, diagnostic imaging centers and private offices.

Sandra Kerr, associate professor and coordinator of Mercer’s Radiography program, said students can pick and choose when it comes to job offers. She reports that for the ninth consecutive year all of Mercer’s radiography graduates have passed the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists national board examination. Graduates either are continuing their education in radiation therapy or have taken jobs in the field.

In conjunction with the degree program, last year Mercer’s noncredit division began offering a Magnetic Resonance Imaging Clinical Fellowship Program to fill the need for professional development and to prepare students for the MRI certification examination.

Continued on page 5
Are you a Mercer Alumnus?

Alumni Association Ready To Grow

A group of Mercer friends is bringing renewed life to the MCCC Alumni Association under the leadership of Dean for College Advancement Bill Mate. Their goal is to plan future events and connect with many “lost” Mercer graduates. At their spring meetings committee members discussed possibilities for future events.

If you are a former Mercer student or graduate, the committee is asking for your current mailing address and email address. They would also like to know what you are doing these days and to invite you to participate in future alumni activities. To respond, please fill out our Alumni Survey, either online at www.mccc.edu or printed here.

COME HOME THIS FALL!

Join us for MCCC’s Alumni Association Homecoming. We welcome all former students back to campus for a fun day of meeting old and new friends. On tap for the day will be a 5K run, Mercer men’s and women’s soccer games, and baseball and softball exhibition games. Be sure to fill out our alumni survey on this page so we can invite you. Don’t miss it!

HAS MERCER MADE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE?

We want to hear from you! Your reply to our brief survey will help current and future students. Please return this form to the address below or fill it out online at www.mccc.edu (click on “survey”).

Have you taken two or more courses at MCCC? ______ Yes _____ No
What types of courses did you take: ___ Credit ___ Non-credit ___ Both
Would you recommend MCCC to a friend or relative? _____ Yes _____ No
What is your highest level of education?
Certificate Program ___ Associate Degree ___ Bachelor’s Degree ___ Graduate Degree
What is your current profession or job title?

Where are you currently employed?

Did Mercer help you achieve your goals? _____ Yes _____ No
Are you willing to: (check all that apply):
____ offer career advice to a current student?
____ be placed on the alumni newsletter mailing list?
____ be included in the “Class Notes” section of the alumni newsletter?

Additional Comments?

Name ____________________________
Maiden Name ______________________
Street ____________________________
City________________________ State___________ Zip ___________
Telephone #______________Day Telephone #
email address ____________________

Please mail to:
Marketing and Public Relations
AD 250
Mercer County Community College
PO Box B
Trenton, NJ 08690-1099

New Alumni Tee Shirts For Sale

Hot off the presses are new “Mercer Alumni” tee shirts in white or grey. To order a shirt call (609) 586-4800 ext. 3601 or send in the form below. Make checks payable to “The MCCC Alumni Association,” Foundation Office, AD 250, P.O. Box B, Trenton, NJ 08690.

Number of shirts requested ____________
Size requested # Large _____ # Extra Large _____
Amount enclosed ($10 each) ____________

Name ____________________________
Street ____________________________
City________________________ State___________ Zip ___________
Telephone #______________Day Telephone #
email address ____________________

Please mail to:
Marketing and Public Relations
AD 250
Mercer County Community College
PO Box B
Trenton, NJ 08690-1099

Members of the newly formed MCCC Alumni Association get together with President Robert Rose, left. They are, from left, Barbara Zelenak, Lilian Amadeo, Dee Amrick, Bonnie Baker, Jeff Callahan, Jeremy Parry, Helene Plank, MCCC Career Counselor Jack Guarneri, and Dan Klim. Not pictured are members Jane Foy, Janice Miller and Dan Posluszny.
In Memory

Louis Draper, Photographer and Professor

Louis Draper, a much-exhibited and published photographer and a beloved photography professor at Mercer, died in February after a short illness. Draper coordinated Mercer’s Photography program since 1982. He was the founder of the Kamoinge Workshop, a ground-breaking collective of African-American photographers who first began exhibiting and publishing together in 1963.

Draper held a master’s of fine arts from the New York University Institute for Film and Television. He also studied screenplay writing at the Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center before joining the MCCC staff. In recent years Draper’s photography was exhibited at the Peddie School, Lawrenceville School and the Trenton Artists Workshop Association. He exhibited in Moscow during a visit there. Among the famous people who posed for Draper were civil rights activists Fanny Lou Hamer and Malcolm X, and poet Langston Hughes. His photos reached a national audience in magazines such as Essence, Camera, and The Black Photographers’ Annual. They also appeared in An Illustrated Bio, Bibliography of Black Photographers, Popular Photography Annual, Caps, Ten Photographers’ Works and many other collections.

In 1998 Draper was selected by his peers to receive Mercer’s Distinguished Teaching Award. Observed MCCC’s President Dr. Seider that Seider is highly sensitive. To become happy you must overcome sadness. You must create the magic and beauty in your own life.”

A Place Called Happiness

Is it possible to create a state of enduring well-being in a troubled world? According to Mercer Professor Dori Seider, Ph.D., the answer is yes, and she suggests a pathway in her new book, A Place Called Happiness.

Dr. Seider, a Mercer faculty member for 31 years, draws from her own life experiences and those of her mother, friends and students in this concise, readable book. “My students asked for this book to be written,” said Seider. “Year after year, in my ‘Psychology of Stress’ course, they wanted to know how to create happiness in their own lives.”

Seider identifies three states of consciousness that affect one’s happiness. There are interior happiness and the voice inside that is self-critical, excessively guilty and depleted of energy. The “rebuilding self” focuses on self-worth and new possibilities, using crises and conflicts to propel personal growth. The “essential self” is a place of harmony, stability and strength that is at the core of each of us.

With a master’s degree in psychology and a doctoral thesis that focused on the colonized psyche and colonized self – or how one can lose who one really is – Seider believes that she had been preparing to write the book for a long time. Seider has spoken about her new book to a number of organizations and is teaching a noncredit course, “Creating Happiness,” based on it. She reports that the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The ideas presented in A Place Called Happiness are even more relevant post-September 11, says Seider, as people try to regain their equilibrium. “There are events that are life-changing. You adjust your sense of reality and work to rebuild your essential self.”

Seider emphasizes her underlying belief that everyone can live happier lives. “I’m not suggesting that people can be happy at all times. But the people I’ve dedicated this book to are those who struggle, who care deeply, who are highly sensitive. To become happy you must overcome sadness. You must create the magic and beauty in your own life.”

For more information about A Place Called Happiness, visit www.xlibris.com or call 1-888-795-4274.

Cara J. Richardson, a Mercer figure in significant this plan. A new “Twilight” high school is planned for a site across the street from JKC. The Twilight program, which is currently housed in another section of the city, addresses the needs of adult students who do not fit the typical high school niche. “This is the same population of nontraditional students that JKC has successfully served for many years,” said Richardson. The Twilight school’s proximity to the Kerney campus will provide many opportunities for reciprocal learning and utilization of Mercer’s expertise. “We want to help create a high school where adults can get turned on to learning,” she noted.

Kerney is also helping to support Trenton’s tourism initiatives. The new Trenton Marriott has hired a number of Mercer grads. Last year the Career Training Institute trained 158 Trenton taxi drivers in customer service – their appearance, attitude, and cleanliness of their cabs. In an upcoming program, CIT will train city restaurants in sanitation.

Said Richardson, “As the tourism industry in Trenton continues to grow, JKC will be called upon to supply a well-educated, well-trained stream of employees and to provide specialized training as the need arises. We are more than willing to do our part.”
“The Roaring Twenties” Scholarship Gala a Huge Success

Guests were greeted by Mercer students handing out headbands, boa and men’s black top hats as “The Roaring Twenties” Scholarship Gala commenced at the Hyatt Regency on March 2. The elegant evening featured a silent auction of original artwork, dancing, hors d’oeuvres and dinner. Participants’ party spirits did not hide the underlying purpose of the event to raise scholarship funds for deserving students who might not otherwise have the opportunity for a college education.

The enthusiastic gala committee was chaired by Raymond Perlman of Borden Perlman Insurance and Jamil Faridy of Faridy Veisz Fraytak, PC. Bill Mate, dean for college advancement, spearheaded efforts for the administration with the help of Elaine Stout, administrative assistant.

The 2002 “Spirit of Education Awards”

Alex Gorsky, president of Janssen U.S., part of the Johnson and Johnson family of companies, was honored as a “Distinguished Corporate Friend.” Janssen and J&J have made possible a shuttle service that transports young Trenton students to corporate headquarters for tutoring and also links Mercer’s downtown Trenton and suburban campuses. Company staff members serve as monitors and tutors to young Trenton students through a major grant that encourages interest in science. At Mercer’s James Kerney Campus, Janssen’s support provided for the complete renovation of the science laboratory.

Dr. Yong Sup “Sam” Sim, MCCC professor emeritus, received the “Distinguished Benefactor Award” for his annual endowment of three scholarships. Sim taught library services and library technology for 27 years at Mercer. He gives generously as a way of thanking Mercer for helping him accomplish his lifetime dreams. Before coming to the U.S. in 1964, Sim taught in Korea. A graduate of Atlanta University with a master’s degree in Library Science, Sim earned his Ed.D. from Nova University. He and his wife are owners and operators of Store and Lock Self Storage in Burlington County.

Alumnus John J. Veisz, AIA, architect, of Faridy Veisz Fraytak, received a “Distinguished Alumnus Award.” A 1977 Architecture graduate, Veisz transferred his Mercer credits to Kent State University, where he earned his bachelor’s degree. Today he counts over 20 years as a project architect, manager and designer, with experience in private educational projects, large residential developments, and numerous educational, municipal and library facilities. He has also taught as an adjunct in MCCC’s Architecture program.

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Mia enrolled in MCCC’s Career Training Institute at the James Kerney Campus, and her life was turned around. Mia did so well in her studies that she began taking credit classes at Mercer, with much academic success. She credits Mercer with making her education possible financially through federal, state, Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) and other scholarship funding.

While at Mercer, Mia was chosen to receive the MCCC Human Relations Award. After graduating in 2000 with a degree in Humanities and Social Science, Mia transferred all of her credits to Rider. A strong desire to give back to her community prompted Mia to major in education.

“My entire experience with faculty, staff and fellow students at Mercer County Community College was a blessing,” Mia said. “MCCC supported me through counseling, tutoring, motivational workshops, leadership training and
President Robert Rose and his wife Linda with Jeannine and Scott Kent of Wawa, a silver sponsor. Festive centerpieces were donated by Wawa.

At left, Connie Maglione, president of MCCC’s Board of Trustees with Allen Silk, Esq. of Stark and Stark, a Mercer Foundation Board member.

At left, surrounding “Big Tony’s Rules” are representatives of Merrill Lynch, from left, Steve and Helene Garcia and Diane and Frank Procaccini.

President Robert Rose and his wife Linda with Jeannine and Scott Kent of Wawa, a silver sponsor. Festive centerpieces were donated by Wawa.

Getting into the spirit of the 1920s are MCCC Foundation Board Members Rafael Sharon, second from left, and Jamil Faridy, second from right. With them, from left, are Mercer staffers Barbara Marx, Elaine Stout, Danielle Garruba (kneeling), Lynn Holl and

Mother and Son Success at Mercer
Maureen King ’00 celebrates graduation with her son, Eric Nissenbaum ’02. King transferred her MCCC credits to Rutgers University, where she earned her BA with highest honors. She is now pursuing her master’s degree. Nissenbaum, a President’s List scholar, served as president of the Student Government Association and was awarded the Student Services Leadership Award. He will major in education at Rutgers.

Mercer’s All-State Academic Team Members

President Robert Rose congratulates Nichole Csizmadia (center) and Emily Jacobs, the two May honors graduates who were selected to be part of the All-State Academic Team, sponsored by Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the international honor society for community colleges. They were honored by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges at a banquet in May, joining with the best and brightest statewide.

Csizmadia majored in Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management (HRI). She will pursue her bachelor’s degree at the University of Delaware this fall through an agreement that enables students in the HRI program to take distance learning courses and MCCC courses that apply to their bachelor’s degree.

Jacobs is a Humanities and Social Sciences major who has been accepted to the University of Pennsylvania. She served as vice president of Phi Theta Kappa and president of the Alpha Mu Gamma foreign language honor society. She received the 2002 Student Human Relations Award at Mercer.

Andrew Wright Sweeps Awards

Presenters at the Honors Convocation brought Andrew Wright to his feet several times. The Electronics Engineering graduate was presented with the Avner H. Fe- rester Memorial Scholarship in Physics, the Electronics Engineering Award, the Academic Affairs Award, and an Albert B. Kahn Scholarship. The President’s List student (perfect 4.0 average) will continue his education in electrical engineering technology at the N.J. Institute of Technology.

JAMES KERNEY CAMPUS RECOGNIZES ACHIEVEMENT

Beverly Richardson, left, provost of Mercer’s James Kerney Campus, led ceremonies on May 14 to honor the academic achievements of students at the downtown Trenton campus. With her, from left, are student speakers Germaine Lee and Joseph Geraci, MCCC Board President Connie Maglione, President Robert Rose, and student speakers Johnetta Moore and Claudio Retamal. Recognized were those who completed associate degree or certificate programs and gradu- ates of the noncredit Career Training Institute, General Educational Development Program, Adult Basic Education Program and English Language Institute.
Alumnus “Hand Picks” Horticulture Students to Join His Team

Dolph Geurds, owner of Cobalt Design, Inc., has a rare opportunity to get to know his potential employees before he hires them for his landscape design and construction firm. As an adjunct professor in the Horticulture program at Mercer, he can hand pick the top students for his company. In fact, all of Cobalt’s eight designers – including himself – hail from Mercer.

“It works out really well,” said Geurds, who teaches courses in herbaceous plants and landscape planning at Mercer. “I have these students in class. I can see their talents and know if they have something to add to my firm.”

Geurds completed his AAS degree in Ornamental Horticulture with honors in 1995 and then transferred to Rutgers, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in Landscape Architecture. “All my credits transferred and the education I received at Mercer was an excellent stepping stone,” he said. “Mercer is a great resource.”

Geurds notes that his career direction was set from early childhood. “I planted my first cucumber when I was four. I’ve had a vegetable garden all my life,” he said. He was drawn to Mercer because of the college’s strong Horticulture program.

During his college years Geurds worked at a local nursery, gathering meaningful experience in the practical end of the landscaping business. By 1999 he was ready to go out on his own. And by April of 2002, when he took over the space that formerly housed Robbinsville Hardware, he was able to bring Mercer’s best with him.

Geurds’ firm gives his employees plenty of opportunity to branch out and grow. “Our goal for our clients is to develop a landscaping solution that’s right for their property and their budget,” he said. “We create unique, sustainable landscapes that require little maintenance and provide great longevity. We handle the entire project – from planning through installation – to produce an outdoor environment that matches clients’ ideals and lifestyles.” Among Cobalt’s services are specialty gardens, outdoor kitchens, irrigation systems, pool design, grading and drainage. A retail garden boutique opens in the fall. For Geurds, Mercer is more than a great place to find talented employees. He met his wife Patricia there seven years ago. They welcomed their first child, Hayden, in April.

Jamie Fasanella made a shrewd business decision before she even graduated from Mercer’s Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management (HRI) program in 1999. She decided to be one of the first MCCC students to take advantage of a unique agreement forged with the University of Delaware in 1998.

The new initiative enabled Fasanella to earn her bachelor’s degree from the University of Delaware (UD) by completing 30 additional credits at Mercer and her final 30 credits through videotaped UD classes.

Originally planning to get her chef’s degree, Fasanella decided she didn’t have the required passion for cooking, and chose instead to focus on hospitality management. “I had always planned to get my bachelor’s degree. When I heard about the Delaware program, I decided to take my first course even before I finished up my Mercer degree,” explained Fasanella.

That was a good idea, according to Mercer’s HRI coordinator, Douglas Fee. “I want students to find out if they will be successful in the ‘virtual’ learning environment,” he said. Most homework assignments and exams for UD courses are completed through the mail and email.

Fasanella says the joint program “definitely worked for me. Mercer was very convenient and great from a financial standpoint. I really liked my HRI professors. They were friendly and very helpful.” Fasanella found her internship at the Doral Forestal particularly useful. Mercer requires a 250-hour internship, which for Fasanella also counted towards Delaware’s requirement of 800 hours. “I worked as an agent at the front desk,” she said. “It was a great insight into the industry.”

Fasanella’s only trip to Delaware came during her last class, worth six credits, when she spent one very busy week there. “It was an intense learning experience. There were five of us. We visited different establishments, created a training video, and did a cooking demonstration.” In the end she received her B.S. in Hospitality Management from Delaware, the same degree earned by those who spend four years on the Delaware campus – and paid $33,000 less. She is now pursuing her master’s in business administration at Rider University.

Fasanella says twelve Mercer students are currently following in Fasanella’s footsteps. “If you want to be in management, it often becomes necessary to get the bachelor’s degree,” he said.

‘99 Grad Completes University of Delaware Degree Through Mercer

Marano ’90 Awarded Young Engineer of the Year

The Professional Engineers Society of Mercer County has selected Michael J. Marano, P.E. ’90 as the 2002 Young Engineer of the Year. Marano is a lead highway engineer for Parsons Brinckerhoff - FG, Inc. His responsibilities include the design and coordination of multidisciplinary projects for such clients as New Jersey Department of Transportation, the County of Monmouth and the City of Trenton. In addition, he is active in mentoring and developing junior engineers, and has trained clients and staff in CAD software.

Marano graduated with honors from Mercer with an AAS degree in Civil Engineering Technology, receiving the Outstanding Graduate Award. He continued at Fairleigh Dickinson University with a full transfer of his Mercer credits, graduating in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering Technology and earning the Engineering Technology Award. He is a registered professional engineer in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

“Mercer definitely played a big part in my success. It was a quality education for a great price – a huge value overall,” said Marano. “The classes I took at Mercer were some of the most challenging I ever took. Mercer gave me the basic tools I needed to succeed in Civil Engineering Technology.”
Big Bird and Friends Grow at Mercer

Plant physiology, landscape architecture and Big Bird? Mercer’s horticulture students studied all three subjects this spring when they cheerfully participated in creating topiaries of Big Bird, Grover and Elmo for a joint project with Sesame Place, the famous Bucks County theme park.

Chris McCarron, manager of landscaping at Sesame Place for 22 years and a 1976 graduate of MCCC’s Horticulture program, suggested the project. With fond memories of his time at Mercer, McCarron was interested in reconnecting with the college. Initially he offered Sesame Place field trips for students to learn about the park’s landscaping program. When it came time to begin this year’s “topiaries” featuring Sesame Street characters, McCarron again called provost and professor Amy Iseneker with the idea of involving students. “We have formed a perfect circle of information,” McCarron said. “We share and pool our resources. The enthusiasm is high.”

McCarron and his assistant, Dawn Kern, visited with the students several times to oversee and demonstrate the project. “We wanted it to be an opportunity for students to learn something that otherwise would never be taught at the college level,” McCarron said. Using wire frames supplied by Sesame Place, the students set up irrigation systems for each topiary. Frames were stuffed with spagnum moss, then planted with plugs of variegated and plain ivy and begonias. Once the plants grew and filled out, the students learned how to shear them. They maintained the figures until the park opened in May. “The topiaries are an opportunity for parents and children to begin a discussion about growing things,” McCarron said. “The children love them.”

After McCarron’s graduation from Mercer he earned his bachelor’s degree at Delaware Valley College, and then did graduate study at the University of Pennsylvania. “My time at Mercer was probably the best college experience I had in terms of enjoyment,” he said. “The quality of the professors was key. They were super enthusiastic.”

McCarron has offered several Mercer students a bonus — landscaping internships at the famous park. “It’s an enriching experience for our students,” Iseneker said, “and it’s a great opportunity for them to gain some park experience, which isn’t easy to find.”

Horticulture students Amy Praria, left, and Katie Houseworth show off a living Grover they and their classmates created for Sesame Place.
The women’s basketball team delivered one surprise after another this season. At the outset they were touted as one of the top teams in the nation, and were looking forward to a strong season and another regional title.

The results were disappointing in the early going; at mid-season the Vikings’ record was 6 – 7, due in part to injuries that kept the team from playing at full strength. But the second half showed that the Lady Vikes were made of tougher stuff as they delivered five straight wins and improved their record to 16 – 10. They entered the regional tournament as the fourth seed, facing Lackawanna in the semifinal game, a team they had defeated twice during the regular season.

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He notes that the tournament was highly competitive, making the victory even sweeter. “There were seven teams, and no pushovers,” said Vecchiolla. “Every match was a nail biter.” Several key matches were come-from-behind wins.

Losing the No. 4 singles and No. 1 doubles player from the fall season, Vecchiolla decided against moving every- body up one slot. Instead he kept his players in their positions and filled in with less experienced players where necessary and hoped for the best. The strategy worked as Mercer scored 25 points, edging out the Fashion Institute of New York by one point.

Mercer won five of the nine flights. Janine Hicks (#3), Jill Matasovsky (#5) and Yating Hsu (#6) won singles titles as did Sarah Bacon and Hicks in second doubles, and Hsu and Matasovsky in third doubles. Also putting in an outstanding effort were Team Captain Barbara Pal (#1), Melissa Eisenstein and Mai Fujita.

Vecchiolla reports that the women were thrilled with the win, particularly the four returning players from last year’s squad which had failed to win the title by just 1 1/2 points. Four players were named All-Americans: Bacon, who holds the record of most matches won in Mercer history (44), Hicks, Matasovsky and Hsu. They join 13 others who have been named to the All-American list in five seasons.

Women’s Tennis Team: National Champs Again

Before heading off to the NCCAA National Tournament in College Station, TX, Head Coach Marc Vecchiolla sat down with Assistant Coaches Ralph Bencivengo and Barb Pleva and planned on paper their winning strat- egy. As it turned out, the Mercer women’s tennis team won every close match and every single flight it needed to win.

“Everything that could happen for us did,” said Vecchiolla. The national title is the Vikings’ third in five years under Vecchiolla. They came in second the other two years.

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Vecchiolla notes that there will be many slots open on next year’s team. “We don’t want to scare people off with our national titles. As long as players have had tennis experience, we encour- age them to come out,” he said.
With a 33 – 10 record on the regular season, the 2002 baseball team looked as good as any team that has come along at Mercer. Strong pitching and solid hitting resulted in some run-away victories against many lesser opponents and continued a tradition of excellence begun under Head Coach Dave Gallagher three years ago.

But that’s where the “ifs onlys” come in. The Vikings entered the Region 19 tournament as the second seed, posting a 7 – 1 regular season record against the other three teams in the tournament. In the opener, they had a decisive 15 – 7 win against the defending national champ, Del Tech. They followed it with a crucial win against Broookdale in the semifinal, 11 – 2. They needed to beat Brookdale just one more time to win Region 19 and advance to the “Super Region” round before heading to the NJCAA World Series. Unfortunately the Vikings suffered a heartbreaking 12 – 5 loss in the championship game, and the season was over.

While there may not have been a title at season’s end, high achievement was still the mark of this Vikings squad. The team’s deep pitching staff was a key reason. No. 1 pitcher was sophomore Shaun Parker (6 – 1). Other pitching stand-outs included Josh Sersfoss (5 – 1) and Keith Cross (8 – 0), Tom Mower, Beau Burris, Nestor Reyes, Ed Francis and Tom Lagler.

First baseman Pat Zegarski was lead scorer while second baseman Keith Guthrie, shortstop Bob Brandauge, catcher Justin Potpinka, centerfielder Adam Rehl, rightfielder Chris Talar, leftfielder Jon Wetzel and third baseman Matt Vibromek all made solid defensive and offensive contributions to the team. Parker, Wetzel, Mower, Zegarski, and Guthrie were selected for the Region 19 and All-GSAC first teams; Cross was named to the All-GSAC second team. The team had them in large measure.

Their final record of 15 – 15 was a successful season. There are also things like teamwork and camaraderie – and this team had them in large measure.

“…”

Head Coach Joanne Harrison went into the softball season with the idea that this would be a rebuilding year after last year’s Region 19 title. So she and Assistant Coach Julie Ross were gratified by the team’s tremendous heart and effort, which produced a 12 – 6 record at mid-season.

Unfortunately the effort could not sustain itself as injuries and a lack of pitching hurt the Vikings in the second half of the season. Their final record of 15 – 15 was just not enough to get them to the tournament this year. But the women had a great learning experience – including the lesson that winning a title is not the only sign of a successful season. There are also things like teamwork and camaraderie – and this team had them in large measure.

“A job well done” to the 2002 team: Michelle Yenchik, Katie Stefanidou, Amanda Friedman, and Caitlin Torre, all of whom were named to the Region 19 and All-GSAC first teams, and Kristen Dombroski, Laura Stackhouse, Christy Fiyero, Jazmin Fuschini, Crystal Kish, Atisha Fitch and Ayesha Fitchett.
Mercer Arts Calendar

Kelsey Theatre's Exciting Line-up for Fall

Full Length Productions

*English Music Hall*
- Sept. 27, 28, 29; Oct. 4, 5, 6

*The Rocky Horror Show*
- Oct. 18, 19, 25, 26, 27 (including midnight Oct. 19)

*The Tamburitans*
- Nov. 9, 10

*Rumors*
- Nov. 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24

*Annie*
- Nov. 29, 30; Dec. 1, 6, 7, 8

Kelsey Kids Events

*Cinderella Ballet*
- Sept. 21, 22

*Pied Piper*
- Sept. 28

*Good Driving, Amelia Bedelia & Other Storybooks*
- Oct. 12

*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*
- Oct. 19

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*
- Nov. 1, 2, 3

*Jason and The Golden Fleece*
- Nov. 16

'Twas The Night Before Christmas
- Dec. 13, 14, 15

*The Nutcracker Ballet*
- Dec. 21, 22

Coming to The Gallery This Fall

"Organics" paintings and sculpture

"Mel Leipzig's Eyes on Mercer" Paintings of MCCC people by the college’s most famous artist

"Line of Inquiry" with Paul Mordetsky, Elizabeth McCue and more

For Kelsey tickets, times and information call 609-584-9444 or visit www.mccc.edu.

Visit our website: www.mccc.edu

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