



Opening the Ancell Learning Commons

ACADEMIC PEER MENTORS— YOUR ARM HAS A *HANDOUT* FOR YOU!

Handout:

The ARM Newsletter

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New Resources!

by Maribeth Griffin, Director for Residential Programs & Staff

Fall semester saw the opening of two new resources on the WCSU campus. The first is the Math Emporium, housed in Higgins Annex. The Emporium is a new means of teaching 100 level math courses through a combination of software-based learning, traditional lecture instruction, and one-on-one tutoring. In addition to in-class work, students will be required to complete assignments in *MyMathLab*. These assignments allow students to work, self-paced, in an online environment that adapts to their mastery of the materials.



For those who struggle in math, this new system doesn't just stick you in front of a computer, however. Faculty are also available in the Emporium to assist you, and the Math Lab is still available for students seeking further assistance.

The second new resource, located in the

Westside Classroom Building's Young Library, is the Ancell Learning Commons.

Committed to offering every Ancell student the tools needed for academic and career success, the Learning Commons provides free tutoring in business courses, economics, math, statistics, and writing. They also will work with students on academic advising, particularly for students facing academic probation, as well as providing **WCSU YOUR MONEY**, a new program offering one-on-one consultations with financial advisors from the local community. (*WCSU YOUR MONEY is open to all students!*) The Learning Commons are open 9 am—8 pm, Monday—Thursday. You can also find tutoring schedules at wcsu.edu/alc.

Whether you find yourself struggling, or you just need a hand from time to time—these new resources and staff are here to help you manage the stress and solve the problems. Get familiar with these—and all the other academic resources—here on campus!



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SUCCESS SPOT

www.wcsu.edu/housing/arm.asp

GET YOUR GROOVE BACK

by Jamie Maitland, Litchfield ARM

Eat Breakfast:



We all have skipped breakfast here or there but it really is the most important meal of the day. Eating

breakfast allows you to feel alert and refreshed. Don't set your alarm for 15 minutes before your class starts. No, set your alarm for about an hour before your class starts so you can fully wake up and have time for a nice meal.

Check your WCSU

email: A lot of you don't understand how important it is



for you to check your WestConn email. Most WCSU professors communicate with their students using their WCSU email account, and if it is not checked on a regular basis you can lose out on valuable information. Your resident director, administrators from different departments, and even important financial aid information is sent to your WCSU email account. Make

sure that you check it!

Plan accordingly:

You all have been through at least your first semester of college. You may not know exactly what to expect for your spring 2014 classes, but you probably have some idea of how to get prepared for them. On the first day of each of your classes make sure that you pay attention to the syllabus. Your syllabus is helpful in more ways than one, so you can know what is expected of you and how you are going to be graded. Also, make sure that you write down important dates in your calendar such as tests and quizzes.



ever, simply introducing your-

Communicate with your Professor: Most college students feel apprehensive when talking to their professors. How-

self to your professor allows you to feel more comfortable when talking to him/her if a question or concern arises for you. If math is a weak subject for you, going up to your professor on the first day and telling him/her your concerns can help you feel more in control of math. Your professor may even give you study tips to help you prepare for tests/quizzes. College is what you make it.

Have fun:

College is not only about making sure that you are doing well academically. You also need to set some time aside for you. Go out with some friends to see a movie, read a good book just for fun, or go home to surprise your sister for her birthday. The more you plan what needs to be done and get it done, the less overwhelmed you will feel, which will allow more time for you to relax.



HEALTH CARE KIT

Most of us have a first aid kit, and probably have a few Band-Aids® hanging around in our rooms somewhere. Dr. Susan Cizek, Director of the University Health Service office, suggests we might consider a few more things for our "Health Care Kit". Take a look at these suggestions:

- Ibuprofen, Tylenol®, or Aleve® for fever, headaches, sprains, strains, or cramps
- Nyquil® for a cold (or whatever your parents/guardians would give you)

- Benadryl®
- Band-Aids®
- Pump bottle of hand sanitizer for your room, and a travel sized bottle for your pockets
- Tissues
- Condoms or other sexual activity protection



Finally, give strong consideration to getting a flu shot—Every Year, Everyone.



by Andrés Chaves,
Centennial ARM

As with any year, 2013 had a number of interesting scientific breakthroughs and discoveries.

Here are 10 of my favorites.

- The NASA rover Curiosity drilled down into the surface of Mars, revealing evidence that MARS may have had a lush atmosphere complete with water.
- An "endoscope pill" was created which can take photographs of the digestive tract without the use of medical probes.
- The Chicago Center for Bionic Medicine created a fully mind-controlled bionic leg, capable of moving exactly like a natural leg with a 1.8% error rate.
- During a study on how memories are stored in brain cells, researchers were able to implant false memories in laboratory mice. Some hope this can be used to help treat trauma victims.
- In an effort to explore alternative energy sources, an apartment complex in Hamburg, Germany was constructed with 129 tanks of algae fixed to the outside walls. These tanks can be turned to face the sun at all times, and in exchange, they provide shade during the summer and gas for heat in the winter.
- Physicists experimenting with the Large Hadron Collider confirmed in March 2013 that what they had discovered in 2012 was, in fact, the Higgs boson. It is theorized that the Higgs boson will lead to an explanation of why particles have mass.
- A pocket of water found in a mine in Ontario was found to be 2.6 billion years old. This would make the water older than multicellular life. (It was also reported that it tasted saltier than seawater with the consistency of light maple syrup)
- A massive drilling expedition in Antarctica led to the discovery of single-celled organisms living in the frigid water. These microbes eat carbon dioxide, iron, sulfur, and ammonia, and their discovery leaves microbiologists hopeful that Antarctica is home to single-celled animal life.
- China successfully landed "Yutu" on the moon, making it the third country in the world to have a soft moon landing (after the Soviet Union and USA). Yutu is a rover currently exploring the northern hemisphere of the moon.
- The coldest naturally occurring place on Earth was discovered: a high, icy ridge between two summits on the East Antarctic Plateau. Continuing from readings taken on August 10, 2010, this area in Antarctica has been confirmed to regularly drop to -136 degrees Fahrenheit (-93.2 degrees Celsius).

Sources:

- Pappas, Stephanie. "The 10 Best Science Stories of 2013." Fox News. FOX News Network, 31 Dec. 2013. Web. <<http://www.foxnews.com/science/2013/12/31/10-best-science-stories-2013/>>.
- Dickens, Donna. "BuzzFeed." BuzzFeed. BuzzFeed Geeky, 3 Dec. 2013. Web. <<http://www.buzzfeed.com/donnad/science-fictions-that-became-science-facts-in-2013>>.

Fueling Up for the Semester



by Alex Saraceno, Pinney ARM

Make a more educated decision the next time you reach for your caffeinated beverage of choice. It is easy to let what may seem like only small parts of your daily routine go unquestioned. In appropriate doses caffeine's effects are useful, but in excess they can be harmful. Most people turn to soda/soft drinks, tea, or coffee for their caffeine craving. Overall soda is the most accessible, tea is the most flavorful, but coffee is the most powerful.

Next time consider these pros and cons:



- + Coffee drinkers are less likely to have Type II Diabetes, Parkinson's disease, or dementia.
- + Coffee improves short-term memory recall and reaction times.
- Coffee causes tooth discoloration.
- Coffee decreases blood flow to the heart.



- + Tea inhibits the body's production of cortisol, which is a stress hormone.
- + Tea contains fluoride and tannins that keep plaque away.
- Adding milk to tea may counteract its benefits.
- Tea can still contain pesticides if labeled organic.



- + To non-drinkers, soda is an appealing alternative to alcohol.
- + Soda is a cheap, tasty, and clean treat.
- Soda weakens the bones and increases the probability of breaks.
- Most sodas have a significant amount of sugar and chemicals that can contribute to weight gain.

Know Your Deans:

Dr. Walter Cramer, Dean of Students

by Eric Keller, Centennial ARM



1) What kind of duties and responsibilities does the dean of students have at WCSU?

Generally speaking, my duties fall into three categories – general Dean of Students duties working directly with students and helping them be successful, and problem solving and collaborating with various colleagues to help those students. Second, I supervise several areas of Student Affairs and help those directors be successful. For the first eight and a half years I supervised the Asst. Dean of Students, Judicial Affairs, Housing, Career Development Center, Counseling, Health Service, Campus Ministries, AccessAbility Services and Student Life/Activities. Recently there has been some reorganization and I no longer am supervising the Assistant Dean, Housing or Student Life/Activities, but I have picked up responsibility for CHOICES. I will also be working on developing a broad community services umbrella and focusing on assessment and research for the Division of Student Affairs. The third area of my responsibilities lies with campus-wide collaborations. For example, I am chair of the Orientation Committee and advise the Student Life Committee.

2) Let's talk about you. Did you always want to become a dean? What do you like to do in your free time?

I've almost always known I wanted to teach. My mother was a teacher and she had a great impact on me. Originally I wanted to work in environmental sciences but after changing my major several times in college, I settled on Music. So I got a B.A. in Music with a minor in Theater; a Masters in Choral Conducting; and then, after working in the field of higher education for several years, I went back and got my Ed.D. in Higher Education. In my free time, I enjoy working around the house building things and repairing things. I also continue to sing and perform in various shows when the opportunity allows. I spend a good deal of time also tracking the lives and activities of my chil-

dren, who are involved in a wide range of things.

3) Do you think the ARM position has been successful to the residents at WCSU?

I do think the ARM position has been successful and aided many residents. I would like to see the program gain greater visibility, and that is something Maribeth Griffin, Ron Mason and I have talked about quite a bit. ARMs themselves have told me over the years that they would like to do more and I believe with each successive group, the ARMS are doing more. Even though Housing no longer reports to me, I look forward to finding more time to work with Maribeth and the ARMS. I think it is one of our most important programs.

4) What do you want people to know about WCSU that students might not know about?

That depends! I'd like students to know of the breadth of opportunities they have at Western. While many students are aware of the excellent academic and co-curricular programs, many, and particularly the commuter students, often don't take the time and/or have the time to spend on campus and therefore don't familiarize themselves beyond the most basic of things they need to complete their majors. Those students who get connected to their faculty and/or get connected in the residence halls or other co-curricular opportunities have a much better experience, perform better and generally have greater opportunities for graduate school or jobs when they leave Western.

5) What are your most frequently asked questions by students, and how would you go about answering them?

Honestly, I believe the most frequently asked questions revolve around how students can "connect" with their professors. Whether it is students asking about how to get help with their work or how to deal with a professor who doesn't understand them or managing their academic work around a "crisis" (physical, mental

health, family, etc.) or just how to deal with "turning things around" – in all cases, students frequently seem lost. My role is to listen to the students and try to understand where they are and what they have (or haven't) done in terms of interfacing with their professors. Then, I try to help the students figure out a way to connect with the professor and re-establish a working relationship that will allow the student to catch up and hopefully succeed. Sometimes the best solution or the only solution is to drop a class or even take a leave of absence, but the important thing is that the students find a way to "talk" with their professors. Far too often students just stop communicating with professor. Frequently, students don't know how to communicate with their professors. And, sometimes students just don't want to talk with their professors and want to walk away. My job is to help students figure out a strategy to manage their "crisis" even if it means taking time off. Ultimately the important thing is for the student to find a way to regain control of his/her academic life. Hopefully I am helpful in that process.

6) Is there a network of graduates that students can contact for internships or employment upon graduation?

Our Career Development Center and our Alumni Association individually and collaboratively have programs in place to do just that. This goes beyond just graduates as contacts, particularly with the Career Development Center. One of our greatest assets (any university's greatest asset for that matter) is its alumni. Students have many opportunities to make connections for internships, Co-op programs and connections for jobs after graduation if they just get themselves into the Career Development Center early. Unfortunately far too many students wait until their senior year or even their last semester to find their way up to the CDC. I encourage you to take some time to talk with Ms. Maureen Gernert, Director of the CDC, to get much greater details about all the opportunities available to our students through that office.





by Erin
Selavka,
Newbury
ARM

Baby, It's Cold Outside

If there's one
thing I hate
most about
January, it is

the weather. Whether it is windy, cold, or snowing, winter weather always drags me down. The only thing that makes me excited for the horrible weather is the possibility that classes will be cancelled. But before you throw on your boots and coats and celebrate a day off, remember these important tips:

- ◆ In order to get first alerts about university closings, sign up for WCSU's Emergency Notification System. When you sign up, you can choose to receive a phone call, text message, or email about weather alerts and closings. I choose to get texts so that if the university closes, I can fall right back asleep without getting up and out of bed! For more information on the Emergency Notification System, please visit www.wcsu.edu/ens.
- ◆ January is prime time for flu season! Cold temperatures and being in close quarters with others can lead to the spread of influenza, especially in the residence halls! It's hard in the beginning of a new semester to get back into waking up early, but make sure to get lots of sleep, eat healthy, and wash your hands frequently. And don't forget—it's not too late to get a flu shot!
- ◆ One of the most important parts of the spring semester focuses on scholarships and financial aid. In order to be considered for financial aid at WCSU, your Student Aid Report must be received by the Office of Student Financial Services by March 15th, 2014. In order to be considered for scholarships by the university, you must complete the online application by February 7th, 2014. For more information on financial aid and scholarships, visit www.wcsu.edu/finaid and www.wcsu.edu/scholarships.

Time To Tackle the FAFSA!



by Natalie Glybin,
Pinney ARM

Yup, it is that time of year again. With the financial aid deadline looming (March 15th!!!), now is a great time to start thinking about sitting down and taking a look at that FAFSA. Here are some tips for getting it done quickly, easily, and relatively painlessly.

1. **Get started early.** The deadline for the FAFSA is officially March 15th. However, because you need to account for approximately two weeks of processing time, you really should submit your FAFSA by March 1st. In addition, aid is given out on a first come first served basis. To a certain extent, the earlier you submit your application, the more likely you are to receive the aid you need. Your FAFSA can be submitted as early as January 1st each year.
2. **Fill out your FAFSA completely and correctly.** It may seem obvious, but small mistakes can delay the processing of your form and lead to a lesser award. This means that when filling out the FAFSA you need to read the instructions carefully for each field and give the most accurate information that you can. In addition, you may need to update certain fields after you have submitted your form. Check back in on your FAFSA account periodically as well as your Banner account to ensure that you do not need to submit supplementary paperwork (i.e., as you would if you were required to go through verification).
3. **Be registered for the right number of credits.** Part time students (those taking less than 12 credits per semester) will receive less aid than their full time counterparts. Therefore, if you plan to be a full time student, make sure you are registered for the correct number of credits prior to the end of the previous semester. Registering for your classes late may lead to your need being calculated for part time as opposed to full time, thereby reducing the amount of aid you may get.
4. **Don't forget to accept your awards.** You will get a letter in the mail notifying you of your awards. You may accept your awards (or not, depending on your circumstances) by mailing the completed enclosed form or you may also accept your awards online. Don't assume that just because you were offered the award it is automatically yours. Check in with your Banner account frequently if you are expecting another award or a scholarship.
5. **Be proactive!** If you have an issue with filling out your FAFSA, are confused about certain questions, or have questions about your award, deal with the issues as quickly as you can. This may mean calling the financial aid office or perhaps utilizing the help section of the FAFSA website. Whatever it may be, do not delay in seeking information as it may reduce your options long term. This is especially important if your financial aid is not going to cover your full tuition, in which case you may need a private loan. Private loan applications take time to process and approve, so you need to know as early as possible if you will need one.

Hopefully these tips are helpful for you when you go to fill out the FAFSA. You should fill one out every year, regardless if you think you will get aid or not. If you are filling it out as a dependent with your parent or guardian, my best advice is to pick a day, sit down together with all of your tax information, and just fill it out. It will be a lot less painful than attempting to do it little by little. In addition, utilize the data retrieval tool that is provided with the form. It will automatically save key information year to year so that all you have to do is review it, saving you time.

If you have any questions about financial aid, the FAFSA, or your award, feel free to call Financial Aid. The number is (203) 837-8580. They are located on the first floor of Old Main and are open Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm.



RESPECT YOUR RESIDENCE HALL

by Allison Vas, Grasso ARM

Welcome to the start of a new semester.

This return to campus brings us back to freshened residence halls, including new door decorations and bulletin boards, and the absence of trash around the buildings.

Every residence hall is a home to the students who live there throughout the semester. Unfortunately, so many residence halls encounter damages and destruction throughout the course of each semester. The real question is why would you choose to disrespect an area in which you and your friends live? You would not go home and pull down the pictures and decorations. You would not go home and leave empty cans and crumpled papers lying around. You would not go home and rip down stair railings or exit signs. So why does it happen in the halls?

For roughly eight out of the twelve months of the year, you live in the residence halls on campus. These buildings become your home. With that should come some respect for the space around you. You may not be living there the rest of your life, but you are for the time being and there will certainly be others living there after you.

If respect were not enough of a reason to treat the area around you well, you might want to remember that you will be billed at the end of each semester for all the damages

incurred throughout the semester. Listed below are a few examples of the average charges various buildings face every semester.

- Any overtime cleaning: starts at \$100
- Carpet replacement: \$50/yard
- Mattress replacement: \$180
- Window screen replacement: \$80
- Chair replacement: \$300
- Exit Sign replacement: \$200
- Lounge chair replacement: \$800
- Love seat replacement: \$1200
- Toilet paper dispenser replacement: \$65
- Cleaning graffiti off walls: \$100
- Holes in walls repair (sheet rock repair): \$45 per square foot
- Painting: \$75/wall
- Littering/litter pick up in common spaces (lounge, stairwells, hallways, etc.):\$50

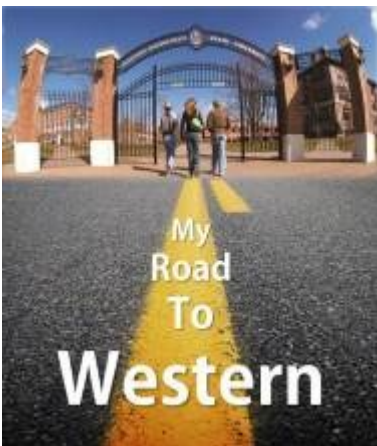
Every damage has a cost and as long as no one steps forward to claim responsibility for the damage, the whole building will be billed. If you see something, say something. You can mention to the Resident Director or any of the Residents Assistants on your staff if you see someone being destructive. If you do not want to say anything to the staff, say something to the person you see doing the damage. It is up to each resident to help keep the residence halls in the shape they were at the start of each semester.

Once again, our dinner speaker series, **My Road to Western**, is back for the spring semester. Get a chance to know professors and administrators in a relaxed setting with terrific food.

We've got a few scheduled so far, and will announce more as we confirm them in the next few weeks. Here's who's already on the list:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Prof. Terrence Dwyer, JLA | Feb. 5th @ 5 pm |
| • Dr. Missy Alexander, Dean of Arts & Sciences | Feb. 27th @ 5 pm |
| • Dr. Jeff Schlicht, HPX | March 12th @ 5 pm |
| • Dr. Keith Betts, VP, Student Affairs | April 21st @ 5 pm |

All meals are in the Faculty Dining Room in the Midtown Student Center except Dr. Betts, which will be in the WS Campus Center. Please join us for a few meals this spring!



Are you 1 of a KIND?

- ◆ Are you **K**nowledgeable?
- ◆ Can you **I**nnovate?
- ◆ Do you **N**avigate WCSU successfully?
- ◆ Want to **D**etermine your future, and help others determine theirs?

In HRL, it takes all KINDS!

We will soon be taking applications for the Fall Semester for Resident Assistants (RAs) and Academic Resource Mentors (ARMs).

Watch for signs around the buildings and on our website, www.wcsu.edu/housing, for more information.

And, even if the time's not right for **you**, why not ask someone to apply who you think would be great at the job?!

Didn't you *love* saving that extra \$250 in October by not paying another housing deposit? It's the new **Year-Long Contract** at work—no worries about losing your space or moving because you forgot to pay!

Now though, it's time to think about the fall of 2014. Deposits will be accepted starting late February, and will be due by March 31st. Again, that will commit you to housing for the entire academic year (just like most housing operations across the country).

More information about the deposit, the year-long contract, and room selection for the fall will be coming in February to your WCSU email. Make sure to check for it!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



What do you think? Have something you'd like to share about this newsletter or other housing issues? Want to give a suggestion for a topic you're interested in knowing more about? Let us know. Drop us a line at housing@wcsu.edu