



GIANT JENGA  
LITCHFIELD HALL, FALL 2014



# Handout:

The ARM Newsletter

November, 2014

Vol. 3, Issue 3

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

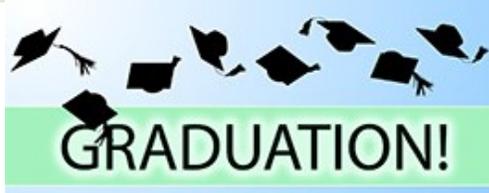
IN THIS ISSUE

## The End of An Era - But Now What?

by **Kenny Ward**, Centennial ARM

As the semester comes to a close, many students are likely coming to the surreal realization that they are about to enter their final semester of college. For seniors, graduation is fast approaching; however, there are still a few months for everyone to deal with the unending anxiety and stress. Within these months, a lot of people will probably be forming college bucket lists and trying to use up every last second to savor the fleeting final days of college. While most of us have probably muttered—or maybe screamed at the top of our lungs—about our frustration with school and desire to finally get out of here, there is no doubt an unsettling permanence to the idea of graduation. To add to this emotional turmoil, students realize that they aren't only having to think about leaving, but also about what exactly they plan to do after they leave.

The Career Development Center at Western can be a very useful tool in weighing your options for post-grad plans and employment. Students who visit are able to discuss potential careers that have a strong relation to their major, but also just general ideas about growing career fields and potential careers that are



often overlooked. Other options to consider are some that may seem unconventional, but can be not only enjoyable, but very beneficial in the long run.

The first of these ideas involves Western's International Student Exchange Program, or as you might have heard it called: ISEP. This program offers Western students a chance to study in a foreign country for a semester. While a lot of people consider partaking, not everyone gets a chance to. If you've gone through all of your time at Western without having taken advantage of this program, you could always consider sticking around for an extra semester. The cost is relatively equivalent to the cost of a semester's tuition with the university, so if funds are not a major issue, this can be a great way to expand your global horizons and have a fun and educational inter-cultural experience.

The other somewhat "unconventional" idea is one that often has a stigma attached to it: taking a year off. This year off can be between graduation and looking into graduate school or even just before really hunkering

Continued on page 3

- 1 The End of an Era—  
But Now What?
- 2 Resolutions
- 2 The First Thanksgiving
- 3 WCSU Graduate Studies
- 4 There and Back Again:  
Going Home
- 4 Fast Finals Helpful Hints
- 5 How to Stay Productive  
Over Break
- 5 What Are You Reading?
- 6 Preparing for Finals
- 6 HRL & Campus Reminders



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[www.wcsu.edu/housing/arm.asp](http://www.wcsu.edu/housing/arm.asp)



Taking a Gap Year

# RESOLUTIONS

Making them, keeping them and influencing them.



## New Semester Resolutions!

For some, November means three days off for Thanksgiving break. For others, November means finding out how you did on that math midterm. November may even mean a new major. Whichever mindset you are in, November definitely means that there is only one full month left of the fall semester!

As we approach the conclusion of the fall 2014 semester, one important thing you should do is reflect. Evaluate the choices you made during this semester. Congratulate yourself on the successes—maybe all of that studying paid off! At the same time, however, reflect on your not-so

lot about yourself and how you can improve for the spring semester.

The next step is effective goal setting. While you may have big plans for the semester and the rest of your time in school, “a goal not written is only a wish”. The best way to achieve any goal is to plan. One format suggested by the book *Peer Mentor Companion*, is the **SMART goal**.



by Colleen Mair, Litchfield ARM

successful moments—maybe you took on too much by taking seven classes. By examining both experiences, you’ll learn a

**Specific**—Your goal should be clear and to the point. If you know what your goal is and can explain it to others, you’re on the right track!

**Measurable**—You should have a way to track your progress. One way is to write out steps toward achieving your goal.

**Attainable**—You should make a goal that you can achieve. If your goal is impossible due to timeframe, for instance, you may find yourself frustrated and disappointed. If your goal is too easy, however, you may not try as hard.

**Relevant**—Your goal should be important to you. It is great to get another person’s opinion, but don’t let someone make a goal for you.

**Time-limited**—Your goal should have a deadline and you should be able to identify when you’ve completed your goal. Not only does this give you a day to celebrate, but it also solidifies your plan!

A new semester brings new opportunities to grow and improve. Take this time to plan out your goals and work toward an even greater semester!

## The First Thanksgiving by Alex Saraceno, Pinney ARM

On the fourth Thursday of November, Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, a national holiday we’ve come to know as time for giving thanks through sharing a meal and perhaps spending the day with our family. Some celebrate by preparing the traditional foods, attending a religious service, or watching a football game. Despite all the variations on how this day is spent, we all have been told the same story of the first Thanksgiving.

American history textbooks and the teachers who use them teach young students especially a fantastical myth of Native Americans and English settlers uniting and peacefully gathering to share a meal. While this version holds such optimism and a positive message: to put aside differences, to

learn about another culture, and to work together to create something beautiful, it is largely untrue.

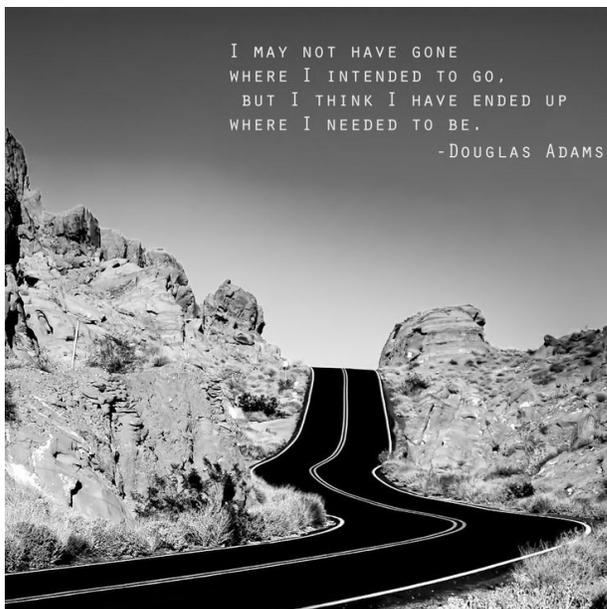
Many consider these “pilgrims” or settlers the real savages - invaders of a land that was already inhabited and cared for. There was nothing peaceful about their presence. Some historians believe this first Thanksgiving celebrated the Pequot Massacre, which had happened right around the same time in Plymouth, Massachusetts and wiped out over seven hundred native men, women, and children.

We can’t change history, but we can educate ourselves to make a better future. Perpetuating this myth and idyllic fantasy of the relationship between the Pilgrims and the Native Americans erases the true history of people indigenous to this land. This Thanksgiving, give thanks to having the means to know better and stand up to racism and genocide.



down to apply for “real world” jobs. While it might not be for everyone, a lot of people feel that this is one of the most beneficial things to do before getting fully immersed in the work force. Taking a span of time to relax and refocus can help you avoid getting overwhelmed, unsatisfied, or even plainly bored within a few years of graduation. Once on a career path, it can be hard to take a break and really experience the world; however, this is much easier done if you take out some time before you fully dive in. A year off doesn’t have to mean doing absolutely nothing, though—and it shouldn’t. During this time, you can work part time and try to save up some money while still taking time to rejuvenate and refocus yourself. Of course, there is also always the option of traveling, which can be much easier before you have quite so many professional commitments. Overall, a “gap year” can actually be a very beneficial experience rather than the embarrassing last resort that many people are made to think it is.

The looming future is stressful to think about, and while a plan of action is of course a helpful tool, it should be noted that there is more to life than having every second planned out. A lot of people spend so much time thinking about exactly how their life will go after graduation that they end up becoming a frazzled mess and emotionally burning themselves out before graduation even rolls around. To avoid this, it can be best to calmly consider all that life has to offer, and remember that no matter what, you can make it through. If you’ve made it through four years of college, you can survive whatever may come next, even if it takes a little time to figure out.



by *Christopher Shankle,*  
*Associate Director, Graduate Studies*



Making a decision to continue your studies at the graduate level is a personal and professional commitment to your ongoing learning and development. As you may be aware, your educational journey has just begun. Many careers now require or look more favorably to those who have or are in the process of obtaining a master’s degree. The faculty and staff at Western Connecticut State University are committed to providing you with an environment that supports your goals.

Western Connecticut State University is a member of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), an organization based in Washington, D.C. CGS’s mission is dedicated to the improvement and advancement of graduate education. Its members are colleges and universities engaged in research, scholarship and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. This is one of many organizations WCSU is a member of to assist the university by providing access to resources that enrich our graduate programs. Additionally, many of these organizations provide information and services to graduate students that may be beneficial to you.

#### **Who are we and what do we do?**

The Division of Graduate Studies is a “one-stop operation.” Students interested in pursuing an advanced degree, whether it would be a master’s degree or a doctorate degree, should contact the Division of Graduate Studies. The Division of Graduate Studies administers all graduate student inquiries, applications, registrations, and graduation procedures. The Division of Graduate Studies staff works collaboratively with all graduate program coordinators to facilitate the application process. The collaboration allows for a stress free process to occur for our graduate students and at the same time provide excellent student service.

The Division of Graduate Studies administers the registration process for all graduate students. Questions regarding the registration procedures are addressed through the Division of Graduate Studies. Graduate students interested in pursuing an Independent Study can obtain this information through our website. Paperwork for an Independent Student needs to be submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies for processing. Once graduate students complete all the required coursework for their degree, the Division of Graduate Studies administers all aspects of the degree audit.

The Division of Graduate Studies conducts a graduate commencement ceremony every May. Graduate students who complete their studies in January, May, or August of that academic year are eligible to participate in the graduate commencement ceremony. A graduate reception follows the ceremony where graduates can celebrate with family, friends, and the university community.

The Division of Graduate Studies is located in Old Main 101, and to address all your educational needs our goal is to make this office a one stop provider. Graduate students may visit in person, or contact us via fax, phone, or e-mail. I encourage you to visit our website at [www.wcsu.edu/graduate](http://www.wcsu.edu/graduate) for the latest information on graduate programs, events, scholarships and financial aid.

# There and back again: going home

by Kyle Venditti, Grasso ARM

Fall semester is nearly over and you're writing your final papers and studying until the wee hours of the day, and the last thing you're thinking of is packing your things and returning to the same room where you once made posters about meiosis in high school and wrote an analysis paper on Hamlet. While moving back home between the Fall and Spring semesters should be a time of rest, you will once again have to blend back into your household family dynamic, so here are a few tips to getting back into family life.

## 1) Pack Early

The fall semester is often times a long haul and hard to keep energy reserves up after midterms. Though finals are fast around the corner, take some time when you're not sleeping, eating or working to start packing some of your clothes or other belongings you wish to take home with you. Doing so will make move-out day much easier and faster, and after your brain is mush from all those exams, the last thing you want to be doing is trying to think about what you left behind at Western when you're back at home.

## 2) Learn how to sneak around

For many students, staying up until 2:00am is a normal endeavor at college. There simply isn't enough time during the day to do everything, so becoming a night owl is perfectly normal and may be beneficial to studying if your class is at noon or later the following day. However, your family at home is not used to this kind of lifestyle. For them, 11:00pm or midnight is late, so you will quickly have to learn how to use the iPhone flashlight app or something similar on your phone to traverse your house late at night. It would also be wise to purchase a wireless headset for any late night shooter games

or music you'd like to listen to, or even just getting used to lip-syncing to your favorite music video. Whether you're on your computer, playing video games or reading a book, doing your best to keep quiet and generate the lowest amount of light is critical to maintaining your late night college student habits.

## 3) Laundry

Laundry usually gets put off until there are absolutely no more clothes to wear for most of us. This means it tends to pile up in the corner of your room, or perhaps all over the floor or bed as time goes on and more essays get assigned. Regardless, this habit will probably not go on unopposed at home. If your mother or father walks into your room and sees a pile of socks rivalling Mount Vesuvius, you're likely to get told to wash it. As a general rule, the best way to deal with this is to establish one day as laundry day during the week. Consider choosing a day that's obscure, like maybe Tuesday or Wednesday, to avoid conflicting with your family member's laundry schedules. Even if your parents don't care about laundry, it's still a good habit to get into and hold onto when you're back at school. Trust me, your friends and guests will thank you if you do.

## 4) Eating Habits

For much the same reason above, tests, classes and projects will indubitably have altered your eating habits from three square, balanced meals a day to two meals consisting of ramen noodles, cheerios and milk and maybe some fruit and granola as a late night snack if you're lucky. Ok, so this is only during peak finals season, but you get the idea. Eating every day when you're hungry and at strange times is a foreign idea to your family. For them, they eat breakfast, either go to school or work, have a

break for lunch and then come home for dinner. Sorry, but we don't really have that luxury as college students, eating whatever we can get our hands on at any time of the day. Keep a secret stash of snacks in your room, either under your bed or in your backpack, for those strange times when you're hungry, and try to avoid the schedules of your family's eating habits if you have a hard time adjusting to home life. It's not easy having two or three people working in the kitchen at once, and it will inevitably end up in an angry battle over who deserves the last chicken wing from the football game last night. Choose your battles wisely when it comes to food, my friends.

## 5) Netflix

Netflix seems to be everyone's best friend these days. It can be a very fun way to blow hours of your time, or if used correctly, release some stress watching TV shows or movies after you've spent a few hours on projects for class. However, being back at home, it can be easy to go into full hermit mode and plow through entire seasons of your favorite shows in a matter of days if you're not careful. Instead of staring at your favorite carbon based light-bulb, why not spend some time with your family or try to reconnect with friends from high school you haven't seen in a few months (if not longer). Use this time wisely. Your shows will always be there. But your friends and family won't be able to tag along wherever you go.

Of course this list is not complete and will continue to grow and change as the years progress and our culture changes, but hopefully this will give you some assistance when you move back home. Remember: with great change there comes great opportunity, so use your time at home wisely!

## Tips to Surviving Finals

So you think you know what you need to do to pass your finals? How about looking at these 5 quick tips from **D News** and Laci Green.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDISZ7ONPjU>



# How to Stay PRODUCTIVE Over Break

by Saraphina Mwangi, Pinney ARM

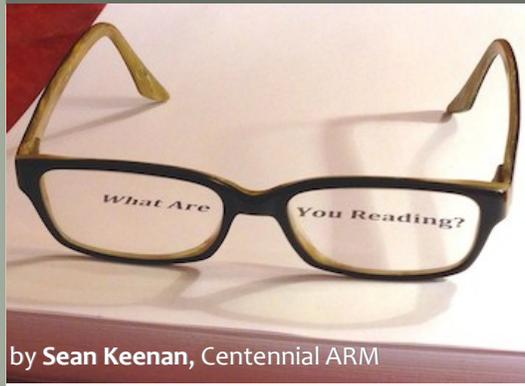
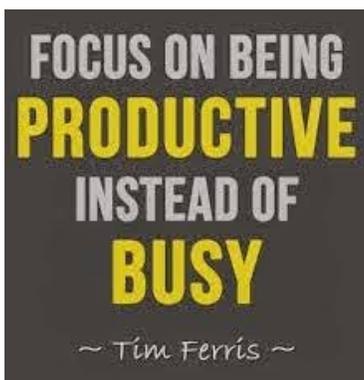
Winter break is just around the corner! It's a time when we finally get a break from the craziness of the semester, and get a chance to de-stress. It can be hard to stay productive when the urge to stay in bed and binge on Netflix is so strong. Not to say that watching Netflix is bad, but four weeks straight on a Netflix binge is a bit excessive.

The majority of us would rather not sit in the library conducting our own research on a topic that interests us. But there are other ways that we can stay productive over break and not see a month go to waste. If you don't already have a job you could apply for a seasonal job at the mall. Stores try to hire around the holiday season to accommodate the influx of holiday shoppers. This way, you can stay productive and make some money at the same time!

Another option is volunteering in your community. Local soup kitchens and shelters look for extra hands around the holiday season to deliver food baskets and toys to those in need and to serve food. You could also volunteer at a nursing home and visit with the residents. Many don't have anyone to visit and feel lonely, especially around the holiday season.

You could also pick a book or two to read. They don't have to be academic in nature; they could be fiction, or just on a topic that interests you. I know after finishing the semester when you were required to read many books that do not interest you that reading may be the last thing on your mind, but for some, reading is relaxing, especially when it is on a topic that you enjoy!

In short, try not to let Winter Break go to waste. Relax and have fun, but also try to be productive, so you don't regret the time wasted!



by Sean Keenan, Centennial ARM

With the winter break approaching, I know everyone is looking forward to having a break from the constant stress of school-work. However, it is important that during this time we keep our brains active and thinking, and what better way to do so than reading a good book? With that in mind, here are some recommendations for winter months that are sure to keep you occupied.

## ROBERT FROST

Many people view Frost as the quintessential American poet. His ability to manipulate words is captivating and his haunting descriptions of nature are sure to keep you reading. Many of his poems even capture the beauty that comes inherently with winter, and it is always worthwhile to delve into the deeper meanings hidden within his words. Any work by Robert Frost is sure to entertain you and keep you thinking over the winter break.

## HARRY POTTER

At this point I am sure almost everyone has read this series. However, with the recent announcement that J.K Rowling intends to revisit the wizarding world, now is a great time to pick up Harry Potter again. While the series may seem childish, especially during the first few novels, there is great depth. The world that Rowling creates is filled with racism, classism, and many other kinds of intrigue. The series masterfully matures with the young wizard and the later books stand up to many great works of fiction. If you read any of the Harry Potter books again, I guarantee that you will find that there is more than meets the eye.

## THE ROAD

With the success of the film adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's novel, *No Country For Old Men*, I am sure many readers are now familiar with the author. However, if you are not sure what work to read, I can recommend *The Road* with complete confidence. The plot follows a man and his son as they struggle to survive in a post apocalyptic wasteland. McCarthy creates a horrifying world which will keep the reader on edge as the man constantly tries to instill morals in his young son in a world that has no room for them anymore. McCarthy is one of America's greatest contemporary authors and is definitely worth your time.

## WORLD WAR Z

Zombies are king in today's horror fiction. That being said, there are numerous novels of awful pulp fiction that are not worth wading through in order to enjoy the brain eating monsters. In order to save you that time, I recommend *World War Z*. Be sure not to get this book confused with the movie; the two could not be more different. This brilliant book follows a journalist as he travels the world and collects records of people and their experiences of the zombie wars. Using this story frame, Max Brooks writes using numerous different voices and styles in order to create unique characters and their perspectives. The result is a fantastic book that depicts a zombie outbreak and how it affects the entire world.

## THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

In this hilarious novel, Douglas Adams introduces Arthur Dent after the destruction of Earth. Arthur soon finds himself adrift in space, searching for a place in a galaxy where he is one of the sole survivors of his species. The book is full of outlandish creatures that will keep you laughing without fail. The universe that Adams creates is bustling with life and mystery. Despite the comedic presentation, readers will notice that his characters are still dynamic and believable. This is a great work and should not be overlooked.

# Preparing for Finals

by Jamie Maitland, Newbury ARM

**Start Early:** The earlier you start preparing for finals, the less you will have to do when they arrive. You can read over notes, go over flashcards, and even write down key points. Either way the information will be fresh in your brain!

**Get Enough Sleep:** A lot of students think that they are going to pass their finals if they stay up all night and cram. Getting at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep will allow you to remember more information.

**Stay on top of your schedule:** Prioritizing is extremely important when it comes to preparing for finals. If you have a final on a Wednesday and your next final is not until the Monday after that, focus more on the final that is the closest.

**Get the help that you need:** If there is a certain topic that you do not understand, make sure that you get help for it because you will probably see the material again on the final. Do not simply overlook the material because you do not think that you will ever use it in the real world. Your Professor taught it to you for a reason.

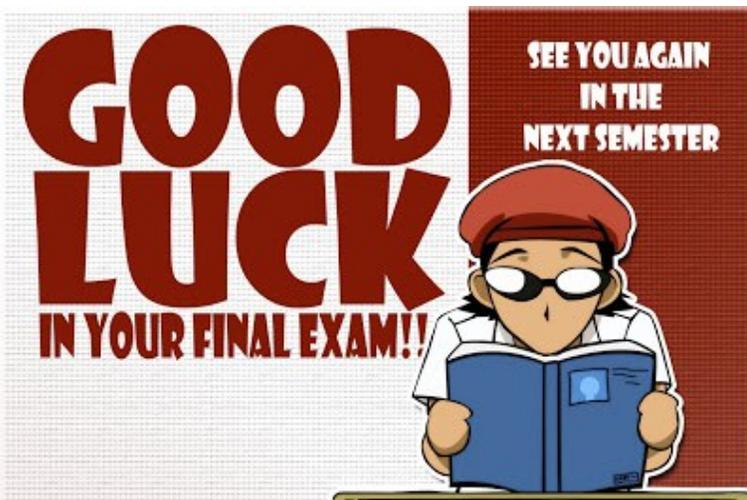
**Use your resources:** WCSU has many resources that you can use to help you. If you need help in math, visit the math lab. If you need help in writing, go to the writing

lab. The tutoring resource center has specific tutors for you as well. Your Professor is also an excellent resource because he/she is aware of what you need to know for the final. I (or your ARM) can help you with anything that we have taken before, so just let us know if you need help.

**Keep calm:** If you look at your exam, do not immediately think that it is too hard and become discouraged. Go through each question one by one and answer it to the best of your knowledge. If there is something that you do not know, skip it and go back to it. Once you choose an answer make sure that you stick with it! Remember not to change an answer unless you are sure that it is wrong.

**Review past work:** If your final exam is cumulative, make sure that you review your previous tests, quizzes, and homework. By doing that you know what to expect on the final and you can be confident.

**Study in a quiet place:** While studying for finals you need to concentrate on the material. You may think that you are fully concentrating on work while around a group of people or in a distracting atmosphere, but you are not. Grab some snacks and a water bottle and find somewhere quiet to study.



Want more hints on studying for Finals? We've got tip sheets on our Academic Success Spot webpage:

<http://www.wcsu.edu/housing/arm.asp>

## IMPORTANT HOUSING REMINDERS

Are you planning to stay on campus over the **Thanksgiving Break**? Don't forget—in order to do so, you must complete a registration form at your Information Desk. You must register if you plan to stay for any part of break, which begins Tuesday night, November 25th, at 8 pm. Registration must be completed by Monday, November 24th.



Winter break is coming (you know—that time after finals?!). If you haven't already started, it may be time to clear out your things and take some stuff home before the last day hits.

If you need to stay on campus for the break, Centennial and Pinney are the buildings that will be open. If you do not live in either building, YOU will need to identify a friend's or acquaintance's room to use, and get the permission of each roommate (signed on your application form).

Applications to stay will be available after Thanksgiving. There is a charge to stay for the Winter Break. See your RDs for details.



\*\* Don't forget to look for campus events in the **WOW** email each Thursday! \*\*

## 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](mailto:housing@wcsu.edu)