SPRING ARRIVES IN MOUNT VERNON

Thank you for reading the spring 2019 issue of the Mount Vernon Extension Center Newsletter. This issue celebrates important work within our college and local communities. County Legislator Lyndon Williams was featured as our keynote speaker for Black History Month, and the Mount Vernon Extension Center was selected as the host site for a public forum on housing needs through the Office of County Executive George Latimer. Student-centered events at the Mount Vernon Extension Center - events like Learn to Tie a Tie and Donuts with the Dean - provide students with opportunities for professional and academic development as well as extracurricular engagement. Advancing the mission of the college means working on community initiatives as well. This issue features WCC Mount Vernon students presenting research conducted during their environmental science class, and also working with students to learn about and advocate for criminal justice reform during their annual Alternative Spring Break. Finally, no issue would be complete without celebrating the success of an extraordinary student leader, and this issue features Jessica Moreira.

We wish you a relaxing summer from the Mount Vernon Extension Center. Don't forget to register for a summer class!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JESSICA MOREIRA

Our students are our source of inspiration, pride, and motivation. Few students have inspired us more than Jessica Moreira, who began her college journey in the fall of 2017 at the Mount Vernon Extension Center. Since coming to WCC, Jessica has exemplified extraordinary leadership, academic excellence, peer mentorship, social activism and more. Jessica is an excellent student, boasting a 3.83 GPA with a major in marketing. Jessica is also a member of the college's two prestigious honors societies: Phi Theta Kappa and Alpha Beta Gamma. In addition, she works two jobs and is heavily involved in campus leadership.

“I was nervous to start at WCC, and decided to start in Mount Vernon because it was so convenient for me,” Jessica explains, “but once I started in Mount Vernon, I felt so comfortable in the center.” When Jessica started at WCC, she worried about fitting in, feeling older than most students and having attended high school outside the U.S. But after two years here, she has changed in ways she can't express in words, she says. “I never imagined that I'd become a student leader,” she remembers, “but everyone at WCC pushed me and motivated me to reach farther and do better, and I have accomplished things and grown in ways I never knew possible. I could not have imagined the person I'd become here in two short years.”

As president of the Mount Vernon Activities Club (MVAC), she is instrumental in bringing innovative and engaging programming to students at the Mount Vernon Extension Center and serves these students as a true leader and peer mentor. She is a member of the tier-one organization Westchester Events Board on the main campus and served as an orientation leader in 2018. She also works as the Marketing Assistant in the Office of Student Involvement, where she performs graphic design to promote student engagement at the college and learns about marketing strategy and working in a busy office.

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Students and community members enjoy learning from County Legislator Lyndon Williams during Black History Month.

Student Kadiatou Camara presents Legislator Williams with a certificate of appreciation in honor of BHM.

**CONTINUED** STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JESSICA MOREIRA

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Jessica remembers that joining MVAC was the launching pad for her career as a student leader. When asked to recall her favorite memory of MVAC, she reflects on the first event she ever attended just a week after beginning her college career. She felt nervous, she remembers, because she was brand new to college and didn’t know what to expect from an event outside class. But the event was celebrating Brazil for Latin American Heritage Month, and as a proud Brazilian, she wanted to attend. “I didn’t know Janna Gullery and Araceli Soriano then,” she remembers, “but they were the MVAC advisors who welcomed me, and even pushed me to speak at the event. I could never have imagined that attending that event would set my college career into motion, introducing me to my two mentors who helped to shape the person I have become.” Having mentors was instrumental in her success, and she remembers how often they pushed her, encouraged her, and exposed her to so many opportunities. “Janna was the one who pushed me to apply for a scholarship even though I doubted myself. Now I have received several, and feel prepared to apply once I am at a four year school,” she comments.

Jessica is also deeply committed to social justice. She worked as a peer mentor through the College Steps program, supporting fellow students who struggle with learning and social challenges. She was also part of the Commit to Change (CTC) leadership development program, a highly selective initiative that challenges students to be innovative changemakers in their community. Her award-winning CTC project even brought her to the Clinton Global Initiative University Conference in Chicago in the spring of 2018. She was also one of only ten students at the entire college selected for the first Alternative Spring Break program in 2018, which engages student leaders in a variety of community service and social activism projects during their spring recess. Jessica also volunteers regularly at the Mount Vernon Extension Center as a student leader, serving on panel discussions for prospective students, leading center tours, or sharing her experiences with visiting groups from local middle and high schools. When asked what advice she would give to new students, she encourages them to talk to other students and seek out help. “Always be willing to ask for help when you need it, and share that information with other students. The college has so many resources and opportunities, and everyone should take advantage to help them succeed.”

As she prepares for graduation, Jessica plans to transfer to a baccalaureate program to continue her studies in marketing. Before she leaves, she will serve the college one more time as one of only three students selected annually as an orientation coordinator to welcome incoming students in the fall of 2019. Though she started at WCC as a nervous student with no aspirations of leadership, Jessica has exceeded beyond what she thought possible, and leaves the college a better place for future students. We can’t wait to see all the ways in which Jessica will succeed academically and professionally, and look forward to having her speak to future students about her continuing success.

COUNTY LEGISLATOR LYNDON WILLIAMS SERVES AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT AT WCC MOUNT VERNON

On Monday, February 11, the Westchester Community College Mount Vernon Extension Center hosted an event in honor of Black History Month. The event featured Westchester County Legislator Lyndon Williams as keynote speaker, who spoke on the topic of “Migrations: A Journey in Business, Law and Public Service”. Legislator Williams spoke to a full crowd of students and community members, sharing his personal experiences that shaped his educational and professional careers. He encouraged students to recognize and take advantage of new opportunities around them, work hard, and stay true to their values even when faced with challenging situations. At the conclusion of the event, Legislator Williams was presented with a certificate of appreciation by outstanding student and Kathryn Davis Scholar Kadiatou Camara. We thank Legislator Williams for sharing his time and wisdom and for his continued support of Westchester Community College and our students.
STUDENTS ENJOY DONUTS WITH THE DEANS

In February, the Mount Vernon Extension Center launched a new tradition bringing students and academic deans together to share coffee and donuts. Karen Taylor, Dean of the School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, visited the center on February 21. In addition to meeting Dean Taylor, students also posed together with her in Viking Hats and WCC T-shirts during a fun photo shoot. On April 11, Ray Houston, Dean of the School of Mathematics, Science and Engineering visited the center to meet with students. During both events, students enjoyed the opportunity to meet their deans, ask questions, and share successes, challenges, and requests. We thank Dean Taylor and Dean Houston for their continued support of all WCC students.

STUDENTS LEARN TO TIE A TIE

Just in time for WCC’s Career Fair, students in Mount Vernon received support to look their best. On March 26, students learned to tie a tie from experts including Yonkers Extension Center Director Joe Cooke and Student Government Association Vice President Jade Watts. Over 60 students received ties. We wish students the best of luck with their future interviews, job fairs, internships, and careers!

STUDENTS PRESENT AT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Students in Professor Natalie Patasaw’s Environmental Science class in Mount Vernon spent the semester conducting research on the effects that de-icing has on sodium concentration in lakes and rivers. On March 27, students presented their research at the Innovation in Research Symposium. Environmental science student Marjorie Coke works at the EPA and performs bio-oxygen dissolve testing for water in Westchester County. She explained that conducting this research was eye opening, “I perform these tests every day,” she said, “and I didn’t know anything about how the chemicals used in de-icing affect rivers, lakes, animals, and plant life. I loved learning more about environmental science.” We congratulate Prof. Patasaw and all of her students who presented their research during the symposium.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE HOSTS HOUSING FORUM AT THE MOUNT VERNON EXTENSION CENTER

The Mount Vernon Extension Center was the site of a public forum on housing on February 5, sponsored by Westchester County Executive George Latimer in partnership with Mount Vernon United Tenants and Community Voices Heard. The event began with remarks by Latimer and Extension Center Director Francine Carl. Next, there was a brief presentation on housing followed by an open forum during which citizens voiced their opinions on housing barriers and housing needs in Westchester County. Over 75 people were in attendance and had the opportunity to visit the Mount Vernon Extension Center.
STUDENTS ADVOCATE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM DURING ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK

At Westchester Community College, we are dedicated to access and student success. We believe that every student has the right to earn a degree or certificate, and we will provide them with every resource we can to support them toward their success. This includes students whose lives have been affected by incarceration. Many formerly incarcerated students may be the first in their family to attend college, and their journey at Westchester Community College will form the foundation for a new life and career.

But those who were formerly incarcerated may have unique needs due to substantial time away from the classroom, lack of access to certain financial aid streams, and stigma. As part of our commitment to supporting current and prospective students, Westchester Community College is a member of Westchester Reentry, a coalition of nonprofit and public sector organizations dedicated to supporting those who are currently and formerly incarcerated and their families and advocating for criminal justice reform to enhance opportunities for reentry and rehabilitation. The college participates in monthly meetups and also attends the annual Reentry Resource Fair organized by Westchester Reentry founder Jen Lackard.

As a result of the college’s membership in this network, Westchester Community College found a unique opportunity for partnership. One of the two annual Alternative Spring Break trips at WCC this year was designed to focus on criminal justice reform. In February, Rachele Hall from the WCC Office of Student Involvement joined Mount Vernon Extension Center Assistant Director Janna Gullery at the Westchester Reentry meetup. Ms. Hall expressed interest in supporting member organizations through ASB community service over spring break and was able to learn more about reentry issues in Westchester County directly from service providers in the field. Because of this unique collaboration, Mount Vernon Extension Center Assistant Director Janna Gullery had the opportunity to join ASB students during a trip to Philadelphia to learn about the history of the prison system and modern prison reform at the Eastern State Penitentiary. During the week of spring break, ASB students learned first-hand about different facets of the criminal justice system and are now positioned to be more educated community members and reform advocates. The college looks forward to continued support for current and future students who were formerly incarcerated.

REGISTER FOR A NONCREDIT COURSE AT MOUNT VERNON THIS SUMMER!

**Computing Fundamentals for Windows**

Whether you are new to computers or you just want to brush up on your computer skills, this course is for you. Topics include managing files and folders, Internet browsers and search engines, email, and social media including Facebook and Twitter. Knowledge of computers is not a prerequisite for this course. $360 + fees and textbook.

Class meets 6 Mondays/Wednesdays
July 22 - August 7 • 1:00 - 4:00pm

**Keyboarding for Youth Ages 10-13**

Gain accuracy and speed while challenging yourself to improve your typing skills! Learn proper keyboarding techniques and strategies to avoid mistakes under the guidance of an experienced instructor. Work with select interactive typing games. $200 + fees.

Class meets Monday - Thursday
9:00am - 12:00pm
Sec. A: July 15 - 18
Sec. B: August 12 - 15

**NEW! MS Excel Basics**

Learn the fundamentals: enter and edit text and values; create simple formulas; and more. Prerequisite: Computer Basics 1 and 2 or equivalent experience. $145 + fees.

Class meets Tuesday/Thursday
June 11 & 13
9:00am - 12:00pm

17 S. Fifth Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY • (914) 606 - 7200 • sunywcc.edu/mountvernon