With Age Comes Wisdom
A fresh start at any age

A Dazzling Degree
Miss Massachusetts USA earns dental hygiene degree

Dollars & Sense
Practical financial aid tips

Give Yourself Credit
Life experiences can accelerate your degree
Events

**July - August 2013 Smart Start Admissions Fair**

**Gardner**
- Tuesday, July 16 - 1PM
- Wednesday, July 24 - 1PM
- Tuesday, July 30 - 1PM
- Wednesday, August 7 - 1PM
- Monday, August 12 - 1PM
- Tuesday, August 13 - 4PM
- Wednesday, August 14 - 1PM
- Thursday, August 15 - 9AM
- Monday, August 19 - 1PM
- Wednesday, August 21 - 9AM
- Thursday, August 22 - 4PM

**Leominster**
- Monday, August 5 - 1:30PM

**Devens**
- Tuesday, July 23 - 4PM

**September 19 NEACAC College Fair**
New England Association for College Admission Counseling
9 - 11 AM
MWCC Fitness & Wellness Center
- Meet with national & regional college and university admissions representatives
- Learn about financial aid options

**October 3 Transfer Fair**
10:30 AM - 1:30 PM
South Café - Gardner Campus
- Meet representatives from over 40 four-year colleges and universities throughout New England

**October 24 Discover MWCC & College Majors Fair**
5 - 7 PM
Commons area - Gardner Campus
- Learn about the educational opportunities MWCC offers its students
- Learn about degree and certificate programs, financial aid, student life, and career services
- Campus tours are provided

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**HIREed Mission**
To connect students of all ages with resources and opportunities for career growth in North Central Massachusetts and New England, and to inform its readership of the specific services and programs available at Mount Wachusett Community College.

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**Cover Story**
Miss Massachusetts USA and 2013 Dental Hygiene graduate Sarah Kidd
- Story on page 12
A message from the
PRESIDENT

WELCOME TO MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE’S INAUGURAL ISSUE OF HIREed MAGAZINE. As we celebrate Mount Wachusett Community College’s 50th anniversary, we are proud to share exciting news about our college and the ways in which we are providing opportunities and growth for our students.

Twice a year, we will bring you the highlights of MWCC and offer information to help prospective and current students attain their educational and career goals. Whether it is the aspiration of our students to complete their associate degrees and transfer to a baccalaureate institution or to gain the needed skills and certifications to enter the workforce, it is here where dreams become reality.

In each issue, you’ll find stories of people who make up the MWCC community, including alumni, current students and faculty, as well as useful information on academic and career services and opportunities. In this issue, recent Dental Hygiene graduate Sarah Kidd shares her quest to excel in her studies and begin a career in healthcare, while also pursuing other aspirations as Miss Massachusetts USA.

In the faculty highlight, Professor Susan Taylor, chair of our Computer Information Systems department, shares her teaching philosophy, interests and outlook on jobs in information technology.

In addition, read about distinguished media executive and alumnus Bob Regan, who shares the story of his own career path since graduating in 1975.

It is our hope that this publication will inspire you to discover the opportunities waiting for you at Mount Wachusett Community College. Come to the college for a visit. We would love for you to be our guest – perhaps our student.

Daniel M. Asquino, Ph.D.
President
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After earning a degree in his chosen profession, Leominster firefighter Mark Burnett continues to fan the flames of learning.

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23 CUSTOMIZE YOUR EDUCATION
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THE TERMS “CONTINUING EDUCATION” AND “LIFELONG LEARNING” MEAN MANY THINGS TO MANY PEOPLE. For Mark Burnett, a Leominster firefighter, the expressions manifest as two pursuits – fitness and art.

Years after earning an associate degree in Fire Science, Burnett, 47, returned to the college setting to continue pursuing his interests in science, health, sculpting and photography. A fitness enthusiast, Burnett earned an academic certificate in Allied Health from Mount Wachusett Community College in a year to enhance his part-time work as a personal trainer. Courses in biology, exercise physiology and kinesiology enhanced his knowledge of the human body to help men and women of all ages and fitness levels make the most of their workouts. It also prepared him for peer fitness training certification from the American College of Exercise.

The academic courses brought other benefits as well, such as refreshing his math skills so he could assist his three children with their high school homework. “They would ask each other for help, because I couldn’t help them. I recommend taking math classes to anyone who has a kid going into high school.”

When he’s not going for the burn in his professional career or as a spin instructor, Burnett leans toward the arts. He has studied with Sterling, MA sculptor Philip Cote for nearly 10 years, as well as with sculptors Lincoln Fox at the Scottsdale Artists’ School in Arizona and Philippe Faraut in Honeoye, NY.

Burnett continues to enroll in MWCC art classes to hone his skills and create extraordinary works in bronze, stone, and clay. Over the past few years, he has taken sculpting courses with MWCC Art Professor Thomas Matsuda, whose contemporary works and traditional Buddhist sculptures are in galleries and sculpture parks internationally.

“Whether you are finishing or starting a degree or just have an interest in one subject, MWCC is a powerful resource that will catapult you in any direction you choose to travel,” says Burnett.

Mark Burnett

Burnett’s bronze sculpture of cowboy Bill Pickett

By Janice O’Connor
“The classes I have taken at MWCC have opened my eyes to the society in which I have lived in but never really saw before,” she says. “The things I have learned while attending MWCC have made me a better parent, daughter, sister and friend. It has helped me realize my own potential. It’s like MWCC is my own personal cheerleader made up of amazing faculty, staff, and peers.”

“I thought college would be too hard for me at 18. Now here I am 31, with two kids, and graduating from MWCC. It wasn’t always easy. Kids get sick, cars break down, and babysitters cancel at the last minute. Through it all, I have never been discouraged because I had the motivation and confidence I needed to earn my degree.”

Mount Wachusett Community College is a popular choice among many students because the environment it creates makes them feel accepted. Berenholz was concerned that she would feel uncomfortable returning to school at her age, but her positive experience at MWCC changed all that.

“The diversity is my favorite thing about MWCC. I think at any age, returning to school can be scary. At first I thought, ‘What if I don’t fit in? What if people think I’m too old? What if they don’t accept me?’ And seeing how diverse the student body is made me feel more comfortable. I was relieved that I could focus on my studies, and not about fitting in.”

Berenholz is a single mom who knows the hardships of working at dead-end jobs. “I wasn’t positively influencing anyone’s life. I was doing the same old repetitive job day after day. Going back to school changed me for the better. I wouldn’t be able to say that if I was still washing pots and pans. Oh, and not to mention, I was commuting over two hours to and from work every day. Half my paycheck was going into my gas tank.”

The short commute, course flexibility, online offerings and multiple campuses were also important factors in choosing the right college, she says. “At MWCC, I was able to take

“Waiting until I was older to attend college was a good move for me because I am more focused now than I was at 18. I value the education and life experiences I received from MWCC.”
STUDENT PROFILE

classes online, on campus, at night, in the morning, during intersession and summers. I took full advantage of the scheduling that best fit my life at any given time."

While expanding her career opportunities by furthering her education, she is also able to pursue her passion for helping others.

“Making people happy makes me happy. Helping people to solve even the smallest problem makes me feel like a super hero. I like having the potential to change someone’s life for the better. Giving someone the tools to help them and then seeing them use those tools to make a big life change, or even just make life a little easier, is the most empowering feeling,” says Berenholz, who is spending the summer volunteering with a non-profit organization. In September, she will enter Anna Maria College as a junior working toward her bachelor’s degree in Social Work.

She was awarded a merit scholarship in the amount of $10,000 for each year she attends the private college in Paxton. The award was given in recognition of her talent, hard work and commitment to her educational pursuits.

Berenholz found there was more to college life than academics alone. “There’s never a dull moment with all the events, activities, workshops and clubs. I can’t contain my excitement when recommending this school to people. The college has so many great programs, flexible scheduling and all the help anyone needs from enrollment to graduation.”

“Waiting until I was older to attend college was a good move for me because I am more focused now than I was at 18,” she says. “I value the education and life experiences I received from MWCC. I don’t know if I could have said the same thing if I had gone to college right out of high school. It may be cliché, but it’s true that with age comes wisdom, for sure.”

Human Services

MWCC offers an associate degree and a certificate program in human services. Explore MWCC’s Human Services programs by visiting:

mwcc.edu/HIREed/humanservices
A dollar and a dream

Media executive Bob Regan's pioneering career began at MWCC

By Janice O'Connor

AS A TEEN IN THE EARLY 1970s, ROBERT REGAN DREAMED OF A CAREER IN TELEVISION. He did not want to be in front of the camera, or in a repair shop surrounded by picture tubes, antennae and chunky dials, as some presumed was the extent of his small-screen ambitions.

“I wanted to produce and direct television. I wanted to be the man in charge, the creative guy who produced the shows. And truly the wonderful thing is, I discovered Mount Wachusett Community College,” he says.

Regan not only reached his goal, but far surpassed it. A distinguished, award-winning industry executive, the Lowell native went on to forge a career record of revolutionary consumer, media, communication and technology platform product development for broadcast, cable, online and mobile channels.

Named MWCC’s Alumnus of the Year in 1989, Regan returned to the campus in May to deliver the commencement address during the college’s 50th anniversary celebration.

Regan attended The Mount from 1973 to 1975 during the construction and opening of the Green Street campus. He, like many other students at the time, was the first in his family to go to college, overcoming tremendous odds to graduate, he recalls.

A member of the National Honor Society in high school, he met with Dr. Vincent Ialenti, then MWCC’s public communications professor, who became a mentor and has remained a life-long friend. Regan left the meeting impressed with the academic program, the faculty, studio and equipment. And, the price was right. He selected MWCC over a handful of Boston colleges offering academic degrees in broadcast communications.
He would set out in the morning in a black 1965 Buick Special he bought for $1 from a neighbor. It was during the gas crisis, so he would make a point to fill up on his assigned “even” day to ensure there would be fuel for the hour-long commute and not risk missing a single minute of a class. “I remember having my radio on and driving along Route 2. I had no power steering, there was a hole in the driver’s side floor, but I had a hope and a dream that I was going to be able to get to the school that day.”

After earning an associate degree in communications in 1975, he transferred to Worcester State and earned his bachelor’s degree in media with a minor in secondary education in 1977, heeding his parent’s advice to have a back-up plan. He then enrolled at Boston University and earned a master’s degree in broadcasting in 1979, so he could teach at the college level.

Regan’s career began that year as an intern at Boston’s WCVB Channel 5, fetching coffee and bagels for celebrities such as Vincent Price. After offering to procure the snack for the legendary actor, Regan recently reminisced, he was aghast to discover all the bagels were gone.

“I knew the executive producer always put a few in her pocketbook to bring home to her husband, so I took a bagel from her pocketbook and gave it to Vincent Price. He said ‘this is delicious,’ and I said, ‘it’s a stolen bagel,’ and he laughed and said ‘it tastes better already.’ After taping the show, Price told the red-haired neophyte, “someday, I hope I’ll work with you.”

Regan was hired by the station soon after as a production assistant, then promoted to associate producer, and later moved over to WNAC, a CBS affiliate, and WNEV. Among his experiences, he worked as associate producer for Weekday with Ted O’Brien, and producer, videographer and editor for LOOK, a two-hour daily afternoon show, the most ambitious local program in the history of television.

Media mogul David Salzman, then president of Telepictures, recruited Regan from the local show to start a nationally syndicated news program from Hollywood. For the next 25 years, he worked with countless celebrities, including Price. Regan hired the avid art collector to host a show in the late 1980s and they enjoyed another good laugh about the stolen bagel. In short order, Regan was promoted to oversee the production of the syndicated shows Let’s Make a Deal, Love Connection and The People’s Court.

He went on to serve as president and chief operating officer for Twin Entertainment, a joint venture of the U.S.–based Interactive Network and U.K.–based Two Way TV, Ltd.; senior vice president of programming and content for GTE MainStreet, the first two-way cable television service in the U.S.; executive producer of NBC’s “Mall of America,” the first major network shopping show; and senior vice president of programming, news and operations for the Financial News Network, which is now CNBC.

Recognized for consistent innovation in the production of groundbreaking digital media content and delivery strategies, Regan was recently appointed founding director of the Dr. John Keshishoglou Center for Global Communications Innovation, an executive graduate program with an industry “think tank” based at Ithaca College. The selective master’s degree program is open to accomplished communications professionals from all sectors of the industry and from around the world.

The recipient of numerous industry honors, including Peabody and Emmy Awards, he also directs The Regan Group, a firm he launched in 2004 to engage with broadcast and online media leaders for cross-functional consulting spanning integrated business, content/technology development, media psychology and marketing strategies.

Over the decades, Regan has remained in touch with his former professor, sharing spirited stories from Boston, Los Angeles and now New York.
“I’ve been very fortunate to follow Bob’s career from leaving Mount Wachusett to where he is today,” says Ialenti, now dean of academic and institutional technology. “He has been on the forefront of a lot of media movements. Now he’s looking at the whole picture and working with people who will be the visionaries to develop the communications of the future.”

“I never imagined what would happen in my career when I was sitting at Mount Wachusett on my graduation day,” Regan says. “I saw television as a way out, a way to do great things. I was a news and talk show junkie. It was my passion, a way to engage in my community and beyond. I admired the people and the opportunity you have in the media to make a difference; how I could impact issues such as hunger, education, health care, HIV/AIDS and issues that impacted business, finance and competitiveness.”

“I’ve had a colorful career for sure, and I’ve had the pleasure of meeting hundreds of celebrities and became friends with many. The dream came true for this Irish kid from Lowell. I am blessed, and I credit Vin. I don’t know if he realizes how much of an impact he made on me, and how much of an impact Mount Wachusett makes on all of us.”

**MWCC Unveils Newest Recording Studio**

MWCC recently added its fifth and most intricate audio studio to the college’s media facilities and innovative learning environments. Students enrolled in the Broadcasting and Electronic Media program’s Audio Engineering concentration are learning industry standard skills and techniques using the large format mixing console, which features state-of-the-art functionality for digitally mixing audio with motion pictures.

The audio facilities complement the recently renovated video training facilities, which use a high definition new control room, HD video cameras and editing systems. Coming next – Audio Studio 6 – an all-digital audio recording/mix room with a digital mixing console and digital connectivity to all performance areas, including the college’s theatre.

MWCC’s Broadcasting and Electronic Media degree offers concentrations in Audio Engineering, Video/Film Production and Photography. Highly credentialed and experienced faculty members widely recognized in the audio and media fields, coupled with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, provide a unique and powerful experience that gives students a definitive edge in a competitive industry.
Miss Massachusetts USA Sarah Kidd Earns Dental Hygiene Degree

By Janice O’Connor

THIS PAST ACADEMIC YEAR, DENTAL HYGIENE MAJOR SARAH KIDD OFTEN BEGAN HER DAYS IN HER SCRUBS at Mount Wachusett Community College’s Burbank Campus and ended them supporting charitable events in her Miss Massachusetts USA sash and glittering tiara.

Kidd, 20, has spent the past three years simultaneously pursuing her associate degree and new opportunities that are opening through the Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants. Along the way, she mastered the art of balancing the rigorous academic program, a modeling career and statewide appearances almost daily.

“My life has become a whirlwind since winning this title,” says Kidd, who entered the competition after being named Miss Central Massachusetts USA. “It’s very prestigious and an opportunity of a lifetime. You can basically make whatever you want out of it.”

The Leominster resident won the state title in November at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. In May, she earned her associate degree in Dental Hygiene and went on to represent Massachusetts as one of the top 15 selected contestants in the nationally televised Miss USA 2013 pageant in Las Vegas this past June.
The goals of the Miss Massachusetts USA pageant include opening doors and providing career and educational opportunities to all of the young women who participate; involving contestants and titleholders in community service programs and charities; increasing literacy throughout Massachusetts as the special cause of the pageant; raising awareness about breast and ovarian cancer in conjunction with Miss USA; and promoting the Youth Anti-Drug Campaign in conjunction with Miss Teen USA.

“We’re very happy for her,” says Anne Malkasian, director of the Dental Hygiene program. “She’s been an excellent student. She’s very engaging and very dedicated.”

In 2010, Kidd began taking prerequisites to enter MWCC’s two-year dental hygiene program with the encouragement of her parents and an uncle who is a dentist.

“When I first started college, the economy was quickly deteriorating, which led me to look for a career path in health care. I knew that if I became a dental hygienist, I would have a job after graduation. Academically, this program is very challenging, but the education you receive is worth it in the end. I am very satisfied with the career I have chosen and am excited to start working after graduating.”

Kidd has enjoyed the program’s close-knit academic setting and varied experiences, which include visiting the State House to support pending legislative bills in the field and caring for numerous patients while gaining hands-on training through the college’s partnership with the neighboring Community Health Center. She and her classmates have also been active in supporting the charitable organization Smile Train through various fund-raising activities. The organization provides corrective surgery internationally for children born with cleft lip and palates.

“One day, it is my dream to participate in a surgery and help out first-hand,” says Kidd, who is also interested in pursuing a bachelor’s degree in the future.

Though she initially had hoped to move away for college like many of her friends, she soon realized the advantages of staying local.

“A lot of my friends who went off to bigger colleges have ended up coming home to attend MWCC or other local colleges due to either cost restrictions or personal reasons. I’m happy with my decision to stay closer to home and attend a college that has allowed me to not only pursue my career in dental hygiene, but allowed me to strive for things in my personal life. MWCC has been a great choice for me financially and socially because I have been able to enjoy life outside of the college setting and not feel so tied down.”

Kidd, who was named the face of ELF cosmetics in 2011, continues to model through the agencies Maggie Inc. in Boston and Model Management Group in New York. She has appeared in New York fashion week, Boston fashion week and has worked on commercial ads for many companies including PUMA and Macy’s.

“My favorite quote is from the movie The Pursuit of Happyness. ‘You want something? Go and get it. Period.’ That is something I try to live by. I don’t give myself any excuses or tell myself I am setting my goals too high. If I have a dream or a desire, it’s up to me to go and make it happen. I think that’s important for anyone to live by. You only have one life, so if you want something, whether it be a career path or a crazy goal of becoming Miss Massachusetts, go and get it.”

Dental Hygiene
MWCC offers an associate degree in Dental Hygiene and an evening academic certificate program in Dental Assisting.

Explore MWCC’s dental programs by visiting: mwcc.edu/HIREed/dental
MAP your PATH

Find Your Direction With MWCC’s Career Coach

By Brenda Schelling-Biggs

MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS HELPING STUDENTS and others make informed choices in their search to find a good career through its newly acquired Career Coach tool. Career Coach is a free, online tool designed to help identify potential career matches by providing the most current local data on wages, employment and job postings, and the associated education needed to get there.

MWCC delivers this free service to current and prospective students, as well as the greater community simply by visiting MWCC’s website: mwcc.edu/HIREed/career.

Through a simple keyword search, students and any visitor to the college’s website can learn about the employment prospects for careers they want to research. The real-time information is customized to the college’s geographic region and includes detailed wage estimates and up-to-date job postings associated with any career. It also includes information about how many job openings in a given field are typically open each year, as well as the anticipated number of retirees projected. Career Coach also includes a built-in résumé builder to help users quickly and efficiently put together an updated résumé highlighting key skills and job experience.

“Career Coach is an exciting and fun ‘how to’ tool to help students, their parents and the general public narrow down realistic career and job options by matching job titles to job availability within a 20, 50 and 100 mile radius of the college,” says Patricia Brewerton, MWCC’s Career Planning & Placement Coordinator. “By matching these career dreams to degree and certificate programs offered at the college, students will know, in advance of graduation, who is hiring and where,” she says.

MWCC is also providing Career Coach information to area high school guidance counselors, career centers, workforce investment boards, economic development boards, chambers of commerce, and area businesses and community-based organizations, and you! Visit today!

Career Coach is made possible by funding through a U.S. Department of Labor grant and MWCC’s Division of Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development, and with support from MWCC’s Center for Civic Learning & Community Engagement and the Division of Access and Transition.

“statistics received from Career Coach, visit mwcc.edu/HIREed/career for the most up-to-date data.
1960s
MWCC is established in 1963 and Arthur F. Haley is appointed director and first president. Classes begin in September 1964. In 1966, the first graduating class receives associate degrees. Heywood Farm on Green Street is purchased for $1 for new campus, and classes are first offered at Ft. Devens.

1970s

1980s
1987, founding President Haley retires and Dr. Daniel M. Asquino is appointed MWCC’s second president.

1990s
Honors Program is created in 1990. MWCC’s gym reopens as a community Fitness and Wellness Center in 1995. Leominster Campus opens in 1999.

2000s
WHEN MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE was established on Nov. 8, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was in the White House, gasoline was 30 cents a gallon, the minimum wage was $1.25 an hour and Bob Dylan was emerging as the voice of a generation.

Much has transpired over the past five decades as MWCC evolved from a fledgling college with 247 students into a multi-campus institution providing academic, workforce development and personal enrichment programs to more than 12,000 credit and noncredit students each year. Since its founding, more than 100,000 students have attended The Mount.

“The most significant accomplishment over the past half century has been the overall impact the college has had in North Central Massachusetts through our academic, career, community engagement and cultural opportunities and the numerous partnerships that enhance the lives of people, businesses and organizations in our region,” says President Daniel M. Asquino.

“Everyone who makes up the college community collectively plays a role in making a difference in the vibrancy and success of MWCC, be they students, alumni, faculty and staff members past and present, the area K-12 school districts, community and corporate partners, as well as volunteers too numerous to mention who have served as trustees, on the college’s foundation and academic advisory boards, and in numerous other capacities,” he says.

MWCC holds a special appreciation for those who contributed to the development of the college, including founding President Arthur F. Haley, former state Rep. Raymond LaFontaine, Frank Hirons and the college’s early administrators, as well as the five board chairs over the decades: James Murphy, Ellen Daly, Jay Davis Drake, James Garrison and Tina Sbrega.

“It would be difficult to find an individual in North Central Massachusetts who doesn’t have a connection to the college in some way, whether they have taken classes, attended theatre productions, visited the fitness center, or participated in community events on campus,” Asquino adds. “Mount Wachusett Community College is truly part of the fabric of our community.”
Faculty Spotlight: Susan Taylor

MWCC Professor of Computer Information Systems

**Q: What is your basic teaching philosophy?**

A: I have found that people learn best through hands-on experiences and that includes computer skills, so I create activities or projects that connect students to the course concepts and reading materials. In addition, I often ask students to reflect on the connections they have made. The combination of first-hand experiences and reflection is often the best teacher.

**Q: What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

A: I feel greatly rewarded when I am able to witness the moment when one of my students reaches the point where something becomes clear to them. It is also greatly rewarding when alumni of the CIS program report back to the department with their post-graduation accomplishments in the field and where they have transferred their credit to another institution.

**Q: Describe one of your proudest professional accomplishments.**

A: I am very proud to be a faculty member at MWCC. So many things fell into place for me to accomplish this and even after over 15 years as a faculty member, it is still an accomplishment that makes me proud.

**Q: What are the up and coming jobs in the Information Technology area?**

A: I believe data collection, analysis and management will continue to grow as will the need to secure, store, transmit, and process it. The hardware and software systems to do all of this, whether mobile, cloud, local or whatever is next, will need technical support.

**Q: What advice would you give to prospective students who are interested in earning a CIS degree at MWCC?**

A: My advice would be to do it. Many students have reported that the CIS degree at MWCC has been the key element of their accomplishments in the field and/or their transfer and obtainment of a four-year degree.

**Q: Describe something about yourself that your students wouldn’t likely know.**

A: Horses are my lifelong passion. I hope to be 85 and still exercising this passion.

---

View other MWCC’s faculty profiles by visiting:

mwcc.edu/HIREed/faculty
Steps to Enroll

1. **Apply for admission**
   - **ONLINE**
     mwcc.edu/apply
   - **PAPER**
     Stop by any campus or download an application at mwcc.edu/apply
   - **TRANSCRIPTS**
     If you attended a prior institution forward official transcript(s) to:
     Office of Admissions
     444 Green Street
     Gardner, MA 01440
     Admissions: 978-630-9110
     Financial Aid: 978-630-9169
     Health Services: 978-630-9136
     Student Accounts: 978-630-9149
     Educational Opportunity Center: 978-630-9823
     Academic Advisors:
       Gardner: 978-630-9109
       Leominster: 978-630-9812
       Devens: 978-630-9569

2. **Apply for financial aid**
   Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
   fafsa.gov

3. **iConnect & email**
   Activate your iConnect and email accounts. This is your connection to registration, financial aid, billing and more.
   iconnect.mwcc.edu

4. **Sign yourself up**
   Attend a New Student Welcome Session and take the College Placement Test.
   mwcc.edu/testing/appointment

5. **Smart Start advising & registration**
   An academic advisor will discuss your test scores, develop an educational plan, review support services and online class options, and register you for classes.
   mwcc.edu/smartstart

6. **Payment**
   Arrange for payment options, waive health insurance and learn about the Mountain Lion Debt Card.
   mwcc.edu/accounts

7. **Medical**
   Submit your medical information. Forms and additional medical requirements are available at mwcc.edu/health

8. **Orientation**
   Attend a required student orientation. Become familiar with the campus, meet new people, obtain your student ID and more!

9. **Textbooks**
   Purchase your textbooks either through an outside vendor, on campus, or through MWCC’s online bookstore:
   bnctextbookrental.com

10. **Start near. Go far.**
    Achieve success! Attend class, visit with your professors during their office hours, stay connected with all the services on campus, and seek help if you need it.
AT MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, we believe going to college should be a destination everyone can reach. We also realize not everyone has the money to get there. Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked financial aid questions.

What is financial aid?
Financial aid is money provided by federal, state and college sources to help students pay their expenses while attending college. In general, all U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens who are enrolled in an approved degree or certificate program are eligible to receive some type of financial assistance.

If I receive financial aid now, do I need to pay the money back later?
There are many grant and scholarship programs available that offer “free money” that does not have to be repaid. Other financial aid programs are in the form of low interest loans that do require repayment, but only after the student has stopped attending school. If you apply early, chances are that a significant amount of your financial need can be met with aid that does not have to be repaid.

How can I get financial assistance if I’m not even sure how to apply?
Applying for financial aid can be confusing. At MWCC, many workshops are offered to assist students with the online application process. There is also one-on-one assistance available through the North Central Educational Opportunity Center (NCEOC) located at our Leominster Campus.

I’m not sure I qualify for financial aid. Should I complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?
Yes. The best way to determine what funds you qualify for is by completing this free application. Your financial eligibility will be determined by a number of factors including family income, the size of your family and number of family members attending college.

When do I apply?
File as soon as you can, even if you are unsure about your college plans. Meeting financial aid deadlines is important, however, even if you have missed a deadline, you should still apply as soon as you decide to attend college.

Missing information letter
Some financial aid applications are selected for a verification process by the federal processor. Students who are required to complete this process will receive a “missing information” letter once the MWCC Financial Aid Office receives your results. The letter will indicate the forms you will need to submit to complete your file. A financial aid award determination cannot be made until all required documents are submitted.

Award letter
Award information is made available to students 24/7 using the online self service system called WebConnect. An email is sent to the MWCC student email account once the file has been reviewed and packaged.

For more information call: 
978-630-9169
Prior Learning Counts

By Michelle Paranto, Meghan Koslowski, and Ruth Slotnick

What’s the value of learning gained through life experience? In terms of credit toward a college degree, it could be worth much more than you realize. Knowledge gained through work learning, vocational or on-the-job training, military service and other nontraditional experiences can help accelerate progress toward your college degree.

That’s what Jon Pike discovered when he enrolled at Mount Wachusett Community College. The Pepperell resident applied learning acquired through his accumulated work experience in photography, computer technology and the humanities to acquire 12 credits through examinations, the equivalent of four academic courses. After reviewing a list of subject areas, the Liberal Arts and Sciences major selected four he believed he would earn a good grade on, brushed up on the material using sample tests and aced the examinations. “There’s no substitute for prior learning experience,” he says.

Non-Traditional Pathways to Academic Success

MWCC recognizes that students may acquire college-level learning outside the traditional classroom. Such learning includes on-the-job and independent learning, military service, volunteer or community service, corporate training, and other non-traditional routes. Students who successfully earn academic credit for prior learning could graduate faster with the needed knowledge and skills for their degree or certification.

Prior Learning Assessment Pathways

Evaluation of Transcripts for Professional Learning

Military Credit: Active military personnel can receive up to 45 possible transfer credits towards their associate degree for prior learning. An official copy of AARTS, SMART, Community College of the Air Force, or Joint Service transcript is required.

Internships: By participating in cooperative education or internship programs, students can earn up to six academic credits toward their degree and gain valuable experience. Students must be in a degree program that participates in cooperative education, completed 21 credit hours, have a GPA of at least 2.5 and submit applications and a letter of recommendation to the co-op counselor. The internship program is currently available to students seeking degrees in Human Services, Criminal Justice, Paralegal and the GM Automotive program.

Credit by Examination

CLEP: The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) allows students to choose from 33 introductory-level college subject exams to demonstrate prior learning and field-based knowledge. Subjects include composition, literature, world language, history, social science, science, mathematics and business.

DSST: DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) are available to non-military and military candidates looking for credit for a degree in Business Administration, Criminal Justice, General Studies or Human Services.

Course Specific Challenge Exams: Students may earn credit on course specific challenge examinations in a particular subject area developed and scored by college faculty. The examination is equivalent in scope and content to the final examination for the selected course. Not all MWCC courses offer challenge exams.

Portfolio Evaluation

ePortfolio Development Course: Students can enroll in a prior learning “ePortfolio Development” course where they create an electronic portfolio. The process includes three phases:

Compile: With the guidance of an MWCC Experiential Advisor and the “Portfolio Development” instructor, students review syllabi and determine if they have mastered the learning outcomes associated with the course(s).

Complete: Documentation is compiled to complement the Portfolio and may include the student’s resume, letters of recommendation, and biographical sketches.

Submit: A faculty member or team from the appropriate discipline will evaluate a student’s portfolio to determine if the portfolio warrants credit for the course(s).
TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR
100+ EXPERIENCE
COURSE OPTIONS

Customize your education by choosing courses offered during the day, evening and online. Attend classes at one of MWCC’s convenient campuses locations in Gardner, Leominster and Devens, as well as a program-specific site in Fitchburg.

Start exploring your educational options:
mwcc.edu/HIREed/nontraditional

For more information on MWCC academic programs and gainful employment information, please visit mwcc.edu/programs.
Mount Wachusett Community College offers a wide variety of courses in many study areas to help inspire you to either enhance your career or to begin a new career journey. We are committed to helping you find the right degree for your future.

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