

President Shanblatt clears up budget crisis rumors

By: PETERSON PRIME
Centurion Staff

While Bucks County Community College is considering borrowing up to \$5 million if there is no resolution to the current budget standoff in Harrisburg, Bucks President Dr. Stephanie Shanblatt wants students and faculty alike to know that Bucks has things under control.

According to the Bucks County Courier Times, the Board of Trustees has recently given its consent for Bucks to seek out a “short term line of credit” from PNC bank. The Courier also pointed out that the money will be used if Bucks does not receive an expected allotment of \$4.3 million from the state legislature by the end of December.

To better understand the rationale behind the steps that Bucks is taking to sustain its finances in case it does not get the expected funding from the state, an interview was conducted with the president of the college, Dr. Stephanie Shanblatt.

During the interview, Shanblatt thought it was important to explain the difference between getting a line of credit and taking a loan. Thus, based on the explanation provided by the president, Bucks would not receive a one-time \$5 million loan from PNC. Rather, the line of credit would give Bucks access to funds that will be used on a needed basis.

When asked if she was worried that Bucks would go into debt as a result of the budget stalemate, Shanblatt said that, “the school is not broke and Bucks expects to get all of the money [its expected annual allocation] from the state once the budget is passed.”

Shanblatt also provided a brief overview of Bucks’ revenue streams and its major expenses. According to the president, Bucks has three main sources of funding. The school gets the bulk of its revenue from student tuition, it accounts for about 50 percent of the school’s funding. The rest of its funding comes from



BCCC President Dr. Shanblatt in front of Tyler Hall

PHOTO CREDIT: BUCKS-NEWS.COM

two key sources: the county and the state. Bucks receives \$14 million from the county and \$21 million from the state every year.

The state disperses the \$21 million to Bucks in four

installments. When asked whether the \$21 million that the school gets from the state pays for some specific or mandated programs, Shanblatt responded that “Bucks channels all of its revenues into

a general fund. After being moved into a general fund, the money is then allocated to where it is needed.”

Salaries, benefits, and other expenditures account
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Community colleges offer valuable opportunities for many

By: MICHELE HADDON
Centurion Staff

Right out of high school, Jennifer Bell knew she wanted to go to college, but she wasn’t sure the career she wanted to pursue. On top of that, she struggled with addiction.

She enrolled at Bucks County Community College and eventually discovered a love of writing. However, her addiction progressed and took a toll on her education. So, she dropped out in order to focus on getting sober.

As she continued on the path of recovery, Bell became a mom. She balanced caring for her young daughter and working as a server.

But, all this time, she never let go of the dream of finishing school and becoming a writer.

Understanding that it wouldn’t be easy to fit school into her already busy life, she thought of Bucks, knowing it would give her the flexibility to balance family, work and maintaining her sobriety, all while pursuing an education.

Community colleges adapt to students’ needs.

In addition to their affordability, community colleges across Pennsylvania have emerged as a compelling option among institutions of higher education, for adapting over time to the changing, and often challenging, realities of today’s students.

Currently, more than half the nation’s undergraduate students are educated by community colleges, and for



BCCC Gateway Building

PHOTO CREDIT: SARA SANDERSON

good reason.

“Students come to community college for a variety of reasons, including cost, the ability to remain in their communities, flexible schedules, the variety of program and degree offerings, the small class sizes, access to quality faculty, student leadership opportunities, etc.,” said Elizabeth Bolden, president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges.

Looking at cost alone, community colleges provide access to higher education to

those who might not otherwise afford it. On average, one year of tuition at a community college is less than half of what students pay at Pennsylvania’s most affordable public four-year universities.

Often a community college student is juggling multiple obligations, such as full-time work or family commitments, along with their studies. These students need a school that can meet them where they are in their lives.

According to the American Association of Community

Colleges, “No other segment of higher education is more responsive to its community and workforce needs than the community college.”

Flexibility is a huge draw of community colleges, allowing students to fit classes into their busy schedules. A student can take one class at a time or enroll full-time, going at a pace that works best for them. For many courses, students can choose from a variety of day, evening or online options.

19-year-old nursing student, Joe Woll explained why he

chose community college, “Originally, it was for cost and convenience.”

Woll, who plans to transfer after attaining his associate’s degree, said he also appreciates the ability to fit classes around his busy work schedule. “It allows me to keep a job.”

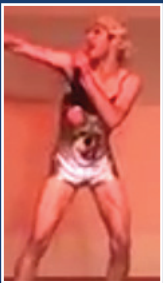
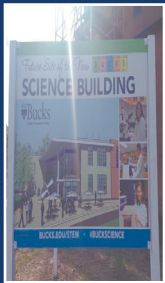
Smaller class sizes also contribute to the appeal of community colleges. Teachers are in a better position to develop relationships with their students, easing the transition into college and encouraging continued success.

“The classes are much smaller, so there’s more individualized help,” said Woll.

Community colleges typically have a more diverse student body, including: students over the age of 24, first-generation students, veterans, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families. Coming from a variety of backgrounds—socially, financially and academically—many community college students face a unique set of challenges that might otherwise deter them from pursuing or completing an education.

Bolden explained that Pennsylvania community colleges provide a wide array of services to aid students in degree completion.

“The goal of all of these efforts is to help students benefit from their educational experience while balancing work, school and family priorities. Several colleges have and/or operate child care programs on campus for students
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Bucks News

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Letters should be limited to 500 words. They will be edited for spelling, space and malicious or libelous statements. Letters must be the original work of the writer and must be signed. For identification purposes, letters must include the writer’s full name and telephone number.

EVENTS

October 29

Haloween Celebration
12:00 – 2:00 pm
StudentProgramming Board
Newtown

Compliment Booth
11:45 am to 3:00
Rollins Center
Psychology Club
Newtown Campus

October 30

Poetry Reading,
Kathleen Mullholland
and Deborah Burnham
7:30pm in the Orangery
Newtown

Compliment Booth
11:45am to 3:00pm
Rollins Center
Psychology Club
Newtown Campus

October 31

Equestrian @ Franklin
& Marshall
@ Franklin & Marshall
Athletics
Franklin & Marshall

November 3

Fall 2015 Course With-
drawal Period Ends

November 4

Getting Down To Busi-
ness Panel Discussion
from 12-1 pm in the
Lower Bucks Commons

November 5

Paying for College
Workshop - the Big Pic-
ture from 12:30-1:30 pm
in Founders 239.

November 6

War of the Wigs Drag
Show from 7:30-9:30 pm
in Zlock PAC

President Shanblatt clears up budget rumors

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for about 80 percent of the school’s expenses.

In the wake of the report that Bucks is taking steps to safeguard its finances, the move has raised concerns. To ease any fears that some students might have regard- ing the financial health of the school, President Shanblatt said that she “wants to reas- sure students that the school has a plan to deal with the budget impasse.” Shanblatt added that the “situation is being carefully monitored” and she wants students to know that the “school will get through this.” Shanblatt further noted that the school will open on schedule for the coming spring semester.

Knowing that a rise in tui- tion might also be a concern for either students or their parents, Shanblatt said that there would not be any uptick in tuition next semester. In case there might be any con- cerns among faculty mem- bers, Shanblatt assured that

students who are also parents. When needed, the colleges collaborate with local community programs to identify appropriate resources for students,” said Bolden.

Additionally, many of the community colleges are adopting a more proac- tive approach to academic advising with the intention of increasing student retention and success rates.

Bucks County Community College, for example, recently



BCCC Tyler Hall Building

“everyone will be paid and there will not be any layoffs or furlough.”

Shanblatt also said that she wants both students and par- ents to know that Bucks tries “hard to keep its budget as

low as possible while giving students a great education at a low price.”

Asked whether she has any message to the state legislature and the governor, Shanblatt urged them to “find

PHOTO CREDIT: SARA SANDERSON

a middle ground.” She also encouraged them to “summon the political will to take on those though issues for the good of the citizens of the state.”

Community colleges offer valuable opportunities

Continued from pg. 1

funding from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, implemented its Integrated Planning and Advising Ser- vices to increase student suc- cess rates. This system assists students through one-on-one advising to plan their degrees, map out goals and track their progress.

The system also allows counselors and academic advisors to “determine in advance whether a student is at risk of dropping or failing out, and it can help assist students on what courses they

services provided by our col- leges address a wide array of issues ranging from academic, to financial, physical and social needs.”

Within a single community, aspirations can vary greatly, and community colleges aim to provide the education and skills necessary for these various pursuits.

“Pennsylvania’s community colleges are diverse institu- tions that serve a wide variety of purposes,” said Bolden. “These include providing programs for students who are

dents have the opportunity to get a jump on their college education. In giving students a head-start, dual enrollment programs increase the likeli- hood that they will graduate from high school and go on to pursue a college education.

Working with organizations like the PACC and AACC, Pennsylvania community col- leges are continuously work- ing to develop and implement new programs geared towards servicing the specific needs of their communities.

“Pennsylvania’s community colleges regularly evaluate local needs and create new programs to meet the de- mands of the workforce,” said Bolden.

Recently, a new statewide Prior Learning Assessment, called College Credit Fast- Track, was launched. The initiative, headed up by Montgomery County Com- munity College, allows “adult learners to earn credit for learning through training and work experiences – and estab- lishes common standards for awarding these credits across the state,” said Bolden.

Other initiatives being advocated for include expan- sion of the federal Pell grant program to include summer courses, which would help low-income and first-gen- eration students persist on their path to a degree; and simplification of the FAFSA form, which will benefit all potential college students by ensuring that they receive all the financial aid to which they are entitled.

A second chance

Bell, now 27, returned to Bucks last spring, grateful for a second chance at an educa- tion and a better life for her and her family.

“I knew that Bucks would give me the flexibility to be a mom, focus on sobriety and chase my aspirations. I can say that if I was not able to attend community college, I am not sure if I would have been able to continue my education.”

While Bell admits that it’s not easy to balance the con- stant demands of motherhood and studying, she is deter- mined to press on, having found her motivation.

“The thing that keeps me going is remembering that I am a role model for my daughter. I want to show her that it is always possible to follow your dreams.”



introduced changes to its advising services to help stu- dents become more engaged and invested in their progress.

According to Bucks Provost and Dean of Academic Affairs Clayton Railey, “The primary change in making advising mandatory for all students is in establishing a personal and direct connection between a student and his/her faculty advisor in the student’s major; every study conducted across the country shows that this connection increases retention and completion.”

Railey further explained the importance in all students having to see an advisor in regards to academic progress, saying, “This system should minimize mistakes in register- ing for courses that may not advance their timely progress through a program or to a transfer destination where some credits may not transfer effectively, or at all.”

Montgomery County Community College, through

should select based on previ- ous academic performance,” according to the foundation’s website.

“We’re paying a lot of attention to student degree completion,” said MCCC President Karen A. Stout. “We’re seeing early behav- ioral changes, students taking more credits. I think it pro- vides really good feedback for the students.”

Many community colleges throughout Pennsylvania offer dedicated support services for veterans, service members, and their spouses and depen- dents, such as helping ease the transition into college life and providing assistance with VA educational benefits.

“Pennsylvania’s communi- ty colleges are dedicated to meeting the unique needs of veterans, their dependents, and those currently serving our country, and we appreci- ate the service and sacrifice of our service members,” said Bolden. “The array of

pursuing an associate degree, students who plan to transfer to a four-year institution, students who are engaged in workforce training to acquire or upgrade their skills for a particular job, and students who attend for personal en- richment.”

For students planning to transfer, community colleges have dual admissions and transfer agreements in place with many of the surrounding four-year schools.

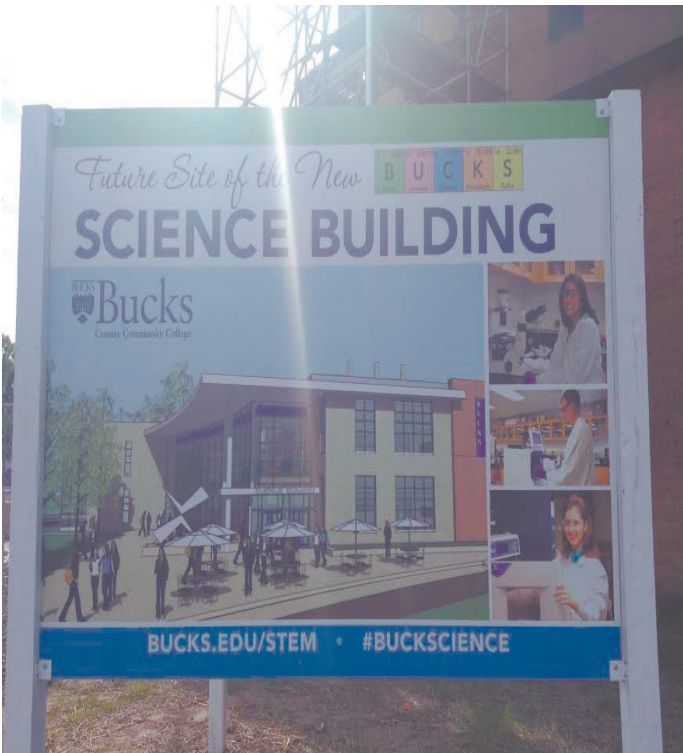
Mattea Kozari, 21, of Doylestown, is a social sci- ences student at Bucks who plans to transfer to Temple next year. “The dual admis- sions program with Temple is really awesome. Basically, I’ll get a Temple degree at a fraction of the cost.”

“We also strongly support expanded funding for dual-en- rollment programs to shorten younger students’ path to a degree,” said Bolden.

Through dual-enrollment programs, high school stu-

Bucks News

Bucks awarded \$350,000 grant from the National Science Foundation



Sign displaying the new S.T.E.M. building
PHOTO CREDIT: SARA SANDERSON

By: COLLEEN GALL
Centurion Staff

Bucks was awarded a nearly \$350,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for technology services used mostly in the new Science Center that is being built on campus.

Dr. Andrew Lawlor, the CIO of Information Technology Services and Principal Investigator, and a team of faculty members heard about the opportunity for the grant and began to write a proposal based upon the requirements.

They learned Bucks was awarded the grant in late August and started the planning process. The grant covers a two year period that will bring about \$350,000 worth of equipment and services to the college.

Dr. Lawlor’s team includes Ron Smith, Director of Networks and Infrastructure, who developed the network’s plans and will have a key role in the implementation of the new network. Lisa Angelo, the Dean of the STEM department, assisted in finding faculty members for the case and will promote the use of the network among the college faculty.

Also, Patricia Smallacombe, the college’s grant coordinator whose expertise is in developing grant applications and following requirements, ensures that our submitted proposals are given due to consideration.

Dr. Lawlor says, “This is a cyberinfrastructure grant from the Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering of the National Science Foundation.” “The grant supports the use of advance networks for research and education,” he adds.

The money will help with the development of a high speed and capacity network that is limited to research projects and educational experiences. Dr. Lawlor explains, “This network will not solely be housed in the new Science Center, but will connect workstations in there that will access the new network once the building is completed.”

This grant is going to provide Bucks with a network for faculty members to conduct research and get students involved so they can gain experience with using

high capacity networks for data-intensive projects.

Dr. Lawlor refers to this as “big data.” He adds that the network “will have the capability to support big data applications and research.”

He uses the example of what the engineering discipline will have. He explains that they will have the ability to transmit video from their drone research at high speeds on an outdoor wireless network.

There will also be a connection to Internet2, which is a special research and education network that has resources not generally available from commercial Internet providers.

The grant team has plans to provide the faculty with information about the applications so they can choose to use them to advance understanding of concepts in the classroom.

Overall, this is going to benefit the entire campus, not only the new Science building. Students will have the opportunities to learn more based on the technology that will be provided and learn how to do more in depth data research.

Bucks is the only community college granted this award but we are also partnering with the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Lawlor explains that the University of Pennsylvania has “a great wealth of experience with high speed networks and research projects and are advising Bucks on our network design and research and education planning.”

They will aid in the design, provide technical services to ensure the network meets the current and future needs.

In addition Bucks is also reaching out to KINBER, an organization that operates the Pennsylvania Education and Research Network (PennREN). Bucks currently utilizes it for a majority of our Internet access, as well as the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center.

For more information on the grant, contact Dr. Andrew Lawlor at andrew.lawlor@bucks.edu and for more information on the new science building and the STEM department, contact stem@bucks.edu.



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Bucks News

F. T. O. provides useful experience for education majors

Gaining real-life and first-hand experience is what makes this group so beneficial



Classroom in Founders Hall

PHOTO CREDIT: SARA SANDERSON

By: TIA TRUCHEL
Centurion Staff

The Future Teachers Organization welcomes all who want to engage in activities and events to broaden their horizons and help guide their careers as aspiring educators. With a rising membership of about 100 students, this organization is a great way to gain real-life experience for students who are studying to become teachers. It was formed to give education majors the opportunity to broaden their field of study. President of the group, Jaclyn Griffin, who has been with F.T.O. for three years, said, “We do a lot of community service and we want our members to gain a better

understanding and connection with our community.” Meetings can help students enhance and expand their field of study by getting assistance on creating portfolios, creating lesson plans, and obtaining transfer and advising guidance for their careers after Bucks. Although the testing requirements in this field of study are constantly changing and evolving, the organization conveniently offers the most up-to-date and accurate versions of the tests to keep you better prepared. F.T.O. supports many amazing charities and events throughout the community, helping to better engage the students with the ones around them. They recently helped out in the Libertae Drive, by

giving many much-needed diapers, and \$125 in gift cards to grocery stores in order for mothers to get what they need for them and their families. The F.T.O. also has been involved with the Autism Cares Foundation for the past five years. Autism Cares is focused on enlightening life experiences of young adults and children with autism, and F.T.O. is a proud supporter of the group. Helping with parties and events sponsored by Autism Speaks is a great way to expand one’s teaching skills by being open to working with diverse groups. Another event that the group worked with was the STEM GIRLZ on Oct. 17. It involved the Bucks STEM department. F.T.O. members

worked on various activities, such as physics and math, with girls in middle school. Professor Kate D’Auria, who has been with the group for 10 years and is the advisor of F.T.O, said, “My personal goal is to get members to come to events outside of meetings to just participate one step at a time. This would help a ton.” Gaining first-hand experience is what makes this group so effective and beneficial. In order to support the growing number of members, they have upgraded their Facebook page, and added social media sites such as an Instagram and Twitter page to spread information about the group. They are currently attempting to link the Perkasio

campus through Skype. Meetings are currently held in Portable 3 (also known as “the education lab”) on Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. and Fridays at noon, beginning with every first and third of the month to help accommodate everyone’s schedules. All aspiring teachers wanting to expand their goals for their future as an educator, The Future Teachers Organization is definitely for you. For more information about joining this organization, go to the link <http://www.bucks.edu/life/clubs/list/> to speak to advisor Kate D’Auria about meetings, events, and projects that can help you get that much needed first-hand experience!

Get a Bachelor’s Degree here at BCCC



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By: NICOLE “NICO” CISNEROS
Centurion Staff

Getting a Bachelor’s here at BCCC will soon be a reality. Expanding on a 2013 transfer admission agreement between Delaware Valley University (DeVal) and BCCC, the Bachelor’s Degree Completion Agreement (BDCA) enables Bucks graduates to take classes at BCCC that count toward a DeVal degree. This could be music to the ears of the over 70 percent of BCCC students who intend to transfer to a four-year institution after graduating. The traditional route for students has been applying to one of the almost 110 institutions that the school has transfer agreements with. However, it can be challenging to find a university that matches specifically with a student’s major. Additionally, students must become well-versed on the type of agreement that exists, such as the difference between “core-to-core transfer” and “transfer

intent.” Perhaps most significant of all these factors is the cost, combined with the distance from home. Officials for both schools cited such concerns as primary reasons for the advancement of the school’s partnership. “I think what prompted [the agreement] was the opportunity to partner with Bucks to...make it more convenient for Bucks students and more affordable,” said Linda Lefevre, the DeVal Director of Continuing and Professional Studies Admissions. “And also to help with the state initiative for degree completion.” BCCC’s own Advising & Transfer Center Director, Ronni November, agreed: “We’re always looking for ways to help students to complete [their degrees] and gain credentials. This is a perfect way to do that... [Students] are familiar with the campus, they feel comfortable here. It’s a logical path.” Yes, the courses are offered

exclusively at BCCC’s central campus, with no plans as of yet to expand to the other two physical campuses or the virtual campus—save for one major that can be taken online. Here’s some other key aspects of the BDCA you should know: •**APPLICABLE MAJORS:** This agreement currently applies solely to those majoring in business administration, criminal justice, journalism, and both the pre-professional and interpersonal tracks. Related majors can be worked with also. •**ELIGIBILITY:** To be considered, you must have an associate’s degree from Bucks in one of the applicable majors and meet the minimum GPA requirements of your academic program. Both alumni and current students are eligible. •**TRANSFERRING CREDITS:** Up to 72 of a student’s credits from Bucks can be transferred to DeVal, which is 12 credits beyond an associate’s. This means students

will only need to take 48 credits with DeVal. •**TUITION:** A perk of this partnership is a reduced tuition rate. Tuition for BCCC students will be \$425 per credit, a significant difference from the \$916 per credit one would pay as a full-time DeVal student. This tuition is at a locked, or fixed, rate that cannot be altered. •**WAIVED FEES:** No application or course fees will be applied to BCCC students enrolled in the BDCA program. •**CLASS SCHEDULE:** This program will be a part-time degree completion program. The classes will be held two nights a week, with a different class held each night at the Newtown campus. The business administration major is the only one thus far that can be taken online as well as in person. In addition to all these benefits, Lefevre emphasized that students completing their DeVal degree here at Bucks are “an extension of the DeVal campus.”

They will be required to complete DeVal’s experiential learning components, which include real-world work experience in their fields of study. They’re also invited to many of the campuses events and should feel they’re just as welcome to DeVal as they are here at Bucks. Those wishing to learn more about this program are encouraged to meet with a DeVal representative on the following dates: •**NEWTOWN CAMPUS:** Rollins Lobby, Tuesdays from 11 am-2 pm and Wednesdays 5-7 pm through Dec. 2 •**LOWER BUCKS CAMPUS:** Student Commons, 10 am-1 pm on Dec. 2 •**UPPER BUCKS CAMPUS:** Student Commons, 12-1:30 pm, Oct. 27 and Nov. 19 Interested students are also advised to visit DeVal’s BDCA page online at delval.edu/bucks, and should contact the Advising & Transfer Center as soon as possible to set up advising appointment with a transfer specialist.

Bucks News

“War of Wigs” benefits local HIV/Aids victims



Last years War of the Wigs

PHOTO CREDIT: WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=D6VH0T1P5KC

By: ANGELA GRABOSKY
CENTURION STAFF

Bucks will be hosting its annual “War of the Wigs” drag show and will be giving a \$250 grand prize for the best performance.

The show will be on Nov. 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the Newton Campus Gateway Auditorium and they will be raising money to house people suffering from HIV and AIDS.

“War of the Wigs,” a play on “War of the Worlds,” is the Open Door Club’s main project for the fall semester. The Open Door Club created the show as a charity event so the club can contribute back to the community. Open Door Club’s Vice President John Dacpano, 21, stated, “It (the drag show) is important because not only does this raise money for the community but it also raises awareness for the

cause.”

The first three years of the show have been competitive but this year the Open Door Club has added their own twist. “We have performers but they will not be competing. They will just be out on stage to have fun and raise money for our cause,” wrote Dacpano.

Bucks students and alumni will do the performances. According to Dacpano finding people to perform is difficult because there are not a lot of students at Bucks that perform and do drag. The charity cause helps sway some people with no past experience in drag to participate. Past students come back to help fill the void and enjoy the thrill of performance again.

Performers will lip synch songs of their choice with choreography. The contestants’ performances are

generally about the length of one song. Most of the music will be by hit pop artists such as Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, and Rihanna.

“It’s not a runway show at all. There’s fashion but it’s more than just the clothes; it’s the art and performance,” Dacpano stated.

Dacpano elaborated on how “War of Wigs” cradles individuality, saying, “There are many different types of drag queens and each one has their own flair and style.”

There will be featured performances by Lady P. C--k, Jasmine Harlow, Starla Skies, and Jillian Diamonds. Dacpano, urging people to see the performances for themselves, stated, “You’ll never know until you see it! Come!”

“Drag shows are important because it gives people like me an outlet in life to show the different sides that we all have in,” Dacpano explained, “The shows contradict the way that we see things as being masculine or feminine.”

Behind the scenes, the

performers do prep work including makeup, hair, and choreography. “Before any event, I make sure everything is good to go before I start my transformation,” said Dacpano.

Dacpano will have outfits to go with each of his performances, adding up to 4 to 5 outfit and hair changes throughout the show. “It’s a lot of different costumes but it’s worth it!” he said.

“War of Wigs” has been successful in it’s three, going on four, year history. Dacpano stated, “I’ve been involved with the show since the second year they had it. It has been well received by the audience and everyone leaves with a smile on their face.”

Tickets are \$5 and proceeds will go to BucksVilla, which provides local housing for people with HIV and AIDS.



Last years War of the Wigs

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Op-Ed

Highs and lows of legalizing medical marijuana in PA



Marijuana plant
PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

By: Lauren Savana
Centurion Staff

For the past five decades, the ongoing issue of the legalization of medical marijuana in the U.S. has only grown more controversial.

The leading source for “Controversial Issues” states that since 2015 under state law, medical use of cannabis is legal in 23 states and the District of Columbia. Yet under federal law medical marijuana is still illegal to consume throughout the U.S.

The property of marijuana used to treat disease or improve symptoms is certain chemicals in cannabis called cannabinoids (CBD). Cannabinoids are very high in antioxidant compounds and are very low in THC Tetrahydrocannabinols.

“Cannabis, or marijuana, has been used for medicinal purposes for many years.” The Departments of Clinical Pharmacy and Family Medicine (DCPFM) reported.

“Although criminalized in the United States in 1937 against the advice of the American Medical Association, cannabis was not removed from the United States Pharmacopoeia until 1942,” says DCPFM.

They go on to report that marijuana is classified as a schedule 1 drug under the umbrella that includes heroin and methamphetamines. Patients can only be treated through statewide programs and cannabis dispensaries in locations where medical use of this drug is available for patients that qualify.

There are two FDA approved drugs that use certain cannabinoids in the U.S. Dronabinol and Nabilone that can be taken in pill or liquid form. They have been known to help with nausea and pain during the process of chemotherapy for cancer patients.

These forms of THC/CBD have also been reported to help with anorexia in patients that have immune deficiency syndrome. These were used as alternatives after traditional prescription drugs failed.

CNN did a report about a 2-year-old girl, Charlotte Figi, who was having seizures consistently from as young as 3 months

old. She was diagnosed with a disease called Dravet Syndrome. Dravet Syndrome is a rare, severe form of intractable epilepsy. This means the syndrome can’t be controlled by medications.

Her parents tried every option there was, at one point Figi “was on seven drugs -- some of them heavy-duty, addictive ones such as barbiturates and benzodiazepines. They’d work for a while, but the seizures always came back with a vengeance.” CNN continued to report.

Finally when the Figis realized there was nothing else the doctor could do Paige Figi, Charlotte’s mother, turned to medical marijuana.

They had a very difficult time trying to find two doctors to sign off on the treatment since Charlotte was the youngest person in Colorado to ever apply for a medical marijuana card.

Bloomberg News did a report on young marijuana smokers and the drastic effects on brain development. It resulted in lower IQ’s and higher risks of strokes.

Since the Figis had exhausted all resources they turned to the last resort. After getting two doctors to sign they tried their first administration of a strain of marijuana called R4. This strain is low in THC and high in CBD.

After testing the oil in a lab they administered the oil to Charlotte twice a day. The results were incredible. The seizures stopped for seven days straight, CNN reported.

As more states follow the west coast into the consideration of legalizing medical marijuana, medical associations in Pennsylvania have been debating it as well.

Chuck Moran, media director of The Pennsylvania Medical Association, openly talked about the position they have on Medical Marijuana within the society. “Our current active position is in support of research on medical marijuana and to change marijuana’s status from a federal schedule 1 drug to federal schedule 2 drug so more research can be done.”

The American RSDHope Organization explains the main difference between these two classes of drugs. Schedule 1 drugs are highly toxic and have no medical purpose. While schedule 2 drugs can be considered to have a medical purpose.

Moran explains that a bill has been in the works for the past two years in Pennsylvania, senate bill 3. This bill is explained by the Pennsylvanian General Assembly as “an Act providing for the medical use of cannabis in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.” This bill has been sitting in the House since 2014. The Pennsylvania Medical Association is against this bill due to the necessary research that this bill is lacking.

The annual House of Delegates

meeting occurs every year in October in Harrisburg. On average 200 doctors attend to debate a resolution for the research of medical marijuana. Then after the debate whichever recommendation is agreed upon goes to the House of Delegates. They can either vote this recommendation down, up, or send it back for another report. It could lead to a different policy or change nothing.

A Board of Trustees also meets four to five times a year to debate policy. They’ve even done media call in’s and have a panel of physicians to mediate and usually the outcome is a 50/50 split.

When asked how long this debate has been going on specifically in Pennsylvania, Moran said, “This is not a new issue, it’s

been going since the late 60’s.” Yet the importance of this issue has only grown larger in discussion and larger in the percentage of people that are affected by it.

When 100 Bucks students were surveyed as to whether they would vote yes or no for the legalization of medical marijuana in Pennsylvania, only 3 people voted no and 2 people abstained.

Asking the students that said yes, Diamond Schuler, 20, a journalism major, said, “I don’t smoke weed and don’t really know much about it but if there are benefits they should be available to those in need.”

When asking students who said no, Jon Schoffler, 19, “I don’t understand the medical benefits to it so why would I vote for something I don’t under-

stand?”

An article written a year after the legalization in Colorado by a community website called Common Dreams reported the state “benefited from a decrease in crime rates, a decrease in traffic fatalities, an increase in tax revenue and economic output from retail medical marijuana sales, and an increase in jobs.”

According to Colorado’s Department of Revenue, the state collected \$40.9 million in tax revenue from retail of medical marijuana sales between January 2014 and October 2014.

As a society we shouldn’t be too dismissive too quickly because as the west coast moves forward, Pennsylvania should consider doing the same.

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Special Report: Community Colleges at a Crossroads

Community colleges face increased financial pressures



Bucks County Community College campus
PHOTO CREDIT: SARA SANDERSON

By: MICHELE HADDON
Centurion Staff

Facing a continued trend in decreased enrollment and rising tuition costs, local community colleges are committed to remaining an affordable source of post-secondary education.

While student enrollment was down by 1.3 percent, or 153 students, last spring at Montgomery County Community College, MCCC President Karen A. Stout said the change wasn't an unexpected one.

"We planned budget-wise for a 3 percent decrease. So, we're doing well as compared to our overall budget," she said.

As the cost of education has gone up, tuition and fees have increased over the years.

"We've had a lot of restrictions with state and county funding, so most of the burden falls on the institution," said Stout.

Last year, tuition was increased by 3.2 percent. The year before that, it was increased by 11.61 percent. And three years ago, it went up by 8.74 percent.

This year, Stout said she expects there to be another tuition increase.

"We're building our 2015-16 budget right now, and we're looking at about a 2-3 percent increase," she said.

Decreased enrollment and increased tuition is a national trend. Bucks County Community College is no exception.

"Across the country, community college enrollment has been down over the last two years. What we noticed was each student was actually taking fewer credits," said BCCC President Stephanie Shanblatt.

At BCCC, the number of students enrolled for last spring was down 3.3 percent, or 293 students. The number of classes being taken was down by 6 percent, or 4,561 fewer credits than Spring 2014.

Again, the decrease was expected, with an improved economy and shifting demographics to blame, according to Shanblatt.

"This is really the natural progression of the economy improving. When unemployment goes up, our enrollment goes up," said Shanblatt.

Unemployment rates have continued to drop since a peak in 2010 at 9.6 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. They were down to 6.2 percent in 2014.

"Another contributing factor is the demographics in Bucks County. There are fewer high school graduates now," said Shanblatt.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, enrollment in primary and secondary public schools in

Bucks County has decreased by more than 5 percent over the last 12 years.

On April 9, BCCC Board of Trustees approved a 3.8 percent tuition increase effective this fall, meaning a typical full-time BCCC student will pay \$4,178 for 24 credits and fees for the 2015-16 academic year.

This most recent increase remains on trend with previous years during which tuition has increased on an average of \$4.50 each year. It is, however, the lowest increase in the last five years.

Board of Trustees Chairman Jim Dancy added that the measure was taken after careful consideration of all financial options.

"The Board of Trustees is always extremely reluctant to raise tuition," Dancy said. "We have taken every action possible this year to reduce our operating costs while continuing to provide the top quality education that students have come to expect from Bucks. Our primary goal is to minimize tuition increases, and do so only as a last option."

According to Bucks President Dr. Stephanie Shanblatt, "All budget lines were carefully reviewed, so there were many small cuts that across the college did add up. Additionally, we had several vacant positions—primarily from retirements—that we will not fill.

Although college officials are under intense financial pressures, forcing them to scrutinize over significant budget cuts, they remain steadfast in their mission to providing affordable, quality education to their communities.

Lately, both MCCC and BCCC have actively focused much of their efforts towards recruitment and retention.

"We're paying a lot of attention to student degree completion," said Stout.

Through funding from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, MCCC implemented its Integrated Planning and Advising Services to increase student success rates.

"We're seeing early behavioral changes, students taking more credits. I think it provides really good feedback for the students," said Stout.

Shanblatt said BCCC officials are looking for new ways to retain students through improved advising services, citing the recently launched Student Planning Module and educational planners as the most recent enhancements.

"We're trying to engage our students, invest in them more," said Shanblatt.

Educational planners meet with new students to help them develop and better understand their goals. They work to ensure students walk

away with a plan.

"We're really trying to make sure students have people they know they can go to, not just an office, but people," said Shanblatt.

Stout cited the decreased high school market as one of the factors affecting college enrollment.

"To combat this, we have dual-enrollment programs with the high schools which gives students the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school," she said.

MCCC's Gateway to College Program is another way the college is working to increase high school graduation rates, and in turn, college enrollment.

Partnering with 16 area school districts and the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board, MCCC started this program in the fall of 2013, to help at-risk students earn their high school diplomas. Students also have the opportunity to earn college credits while completing high school requirements.

Workforce development is another major focus of community colleges and officials continue to develop programs geared for high-demand fields while also building mutually-beneficial partnerships with local employers.

This past February, MCCC received a \$2 million gift from the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation. This gift will establish an endowment that will help fund students who are pursuing an education towards a career in high-demand industries.

"They see the value in us building the workforce pipeline of the future," said Stout.

The funds from the gift will seed money for new programs and student scholarships, fund incumbent worker training, and provide support for veterans pursuing their education in in high-demand or STEM fields.

Regardless of the financial hurdles, community college officials continue to advocate for improved growth, thanks to a commitment towards their mission and a strong belief in the value community colleges add to their local communities.

"There's no doubt that there's skepticism about the value of a college degree, but there is plenty of research showing there's still a strong return on investment with a college degree," said Stout.

According to the Pew Research Center, "A typical college graduate earns an estimated \$650,000 over a career more than a high school graduate.

Shanblatt asserted that the value of obtaining a college degree remains very high.

According to Shanblatt, "The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce says that almost 70 percent of all jobs in the United States require some higher education; perhaps not always a four-year degree, but at least a certificate or Associate Degree. In order to earn a family-sustaining wage in today's job market, some higher education is necessary."

"The value of a Bucks degree, whether as the first step towards a Bachelor's Degree or to gain immediate employment, is significant," said Shanblatt. "Bucks [will] continue to provide a quality learning environment with faculty dedicated to their students at a great value."

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Special Report: Community Colleges at a Crossroads

Community college education underestimated and underfunded

By: MICHELE HADDON

Centaurian Staff

What do Aaron Rodgers, George Lucas, Morgan Freeman, Jim Lehrer, and Eileen Collins all have in common?

Underneath their most notable achievements, these five prominent figures share a common thread through their humble beginnings at a community college.

Yes—Aaron Rodgers, the quarterback who led the Green Bay Packers to a Super Bowl victory in 2011; George Lucas, the film director and screenwriter behind the famous Star Wars franchise; and Morgan Freeman, Oscar-winning actor—all started out in community college.

So did Jim Lehrer, former anchor and executive editor of “PBS NewsHour”; and Eileen Collins, retired NASA astronaut and the first female pilot and commander of a Space Shuttle.

And this is just to name a few.

Yet, not unlike the many film crew hands that work diligently behind-the-scenes of a Hollywood movie, community colleges are all-too-often overlooked in the rolling credits of people’s lives.

Fighting to overcome a longstanding reputation that these schools are nothing more than a marginal path towards a mediocre future, community college advocates are looking to break this stigma, gain the recognition they feel these schools deserve, and increase much-needed public funding.

“So many great people have come from community colleges. So many great minds have had much more of a humble start than a Harvard education,” said Matthew Kelly, a 21-year-old business student at BCCC who is working to help increase support for community colleges.

Kelly, along with BCCC President Stephanie Shanblatt, professors John Strauss and John Sheridan, and other fellow students, went to Harrisburg last month to lobby for increased community college funding.

“We just stressed that Community College was an important building block and is just as deserving of the same clout that bigger universities receive,” said Kelly.

The group met in State Senator Robert Tomlinson’s office, providing testimony to Tomlinson and state representatives Frank Farry and Tina Davis. They shared their stories on how community college has been a positive force in their lives, emphasizing why funding was important to each of them.

Among the students, was 29-year-old Christina Smith, a business studies major graduating from BCCC this month, who went up to Harrisburg a day earlier to be honored as part of the 2015 All-Pennsylvania Academic Team.

“Bucks County Community College pretty much saved my life,” said Smith, describing how she failed at her first attempt at college, but eventually found her second chance.

“When I was younger, I went away to school the first time to the University of California Pennsylvania,” she said.

“For numerous reasons, I didn’t do well. I wasn’t ready, I wasn’t acclimated. I wasn’t prepared, I didn’t know what was going to be required of me. And then I had so many different family responsibilities that kept

getting in the way and it was an overwhelming thing,” she said.

“When I failed out of California University of Pennsylvania, I thought that was it. I was done. I had my shot, and I blew it,” said Smith.

Years later, with encouragement from her boss and the help of tuition reimbursement, Smith enrolled at BCCC, determined to make it work this time around. Exceeding her own expectations, she found herself completely engaged in the entire college experience.

“I came here and I got involved, and I started doing everything I wanted to do the first time. I was able to be a part of student government, the Lower Bucks Programming Council, the business club, the Women Inspiring and Networking club, and I’m the president of the Black and Latino Association. And I have a 3.85 GPA, as opposed to the 0.03 GPA I had when I left California University,” said Smith.

Grateful, Smith added, “It gave me my life back, it gave me a chance back. It gave me opportunity and hope that I never thought I would have again.”

As each of the students shared their stories to the state legislators, Smith felt they were well-received, but also learned that it’s an ongoing battle.

“I felt they heard what we had to say, that they were interested and cared. But they also explained that since PA is such a diverse state, everyone wants funding for very different things,” said Smith.

In the last 10 years, the highest Pennsylvania has budgeted towards its 14 community colleges was \$236 million in 2008-09 under the Rendell administration. In the two years that followed, funding was sustained thanks to help from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

But then in the 2011-12 Pennsylvania budget, the first of Governor Corbett’s term, state funding for community colleges was slashed by 10 percent—to \$212,167,000—where it has remained ever since.

Education funding is one of the major priorities highlighted in the proposed 2015-16 Pennsylvania budget, the first under the Wolf administration, bringing some hope to the state’s community colleges. If passed, community college funding would increase by 7 percent this coming fiscal year—to \$230,723,000.

“With Wolf, so far, the future looks bright for education,” said Kelly. “There’s so many programs that are on the cusp of creation, that if the funding was here, we’d be creating even brighter futures.”

Aside from state funding, community colleges rely on their sponsoring district for subsidizing a large share of the cost—one third, according to the Community College Act of 1963.

At Bucks County Community College, the operating budget for 2014-15 was just under \$84 million. The County of Bucks, however, contributed only \$8.47 million according to its 2015 budget.

In 10 years, the county has increased its funding of the community college by only 7.76 percent, with the last increase taking place in 2009.

“The county can do more, a lot more, to advocate,” said Kelly.

According to Bucks County Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia, there are two important concepts to be considered when it comes to the county’s flat funding of the community college.

“First, the county is dependent on property taxes, as is local municipal governments and school boards. When the state started cutting its funding to school districts in the 80s, school boards had to raise property taxes. Over the past 30 years, school property taxes have risen astronomically,” said Marseglia.

“The only way to help residents afford the school property taxes, has been for

municipal and county government to not increase property taxes. Even when the county has raised property taxes a small amount, it has been to cover required county services. There just has not been room to increase property taxes to the level necessary to fund BCCC at the ideal one-third share,” she added.

“Second, county commissioners and state legislators are all elected to office. If and when we raise taxes, we get the ire of the public. The public has not wanted their taxes increased,” said Marseglia.

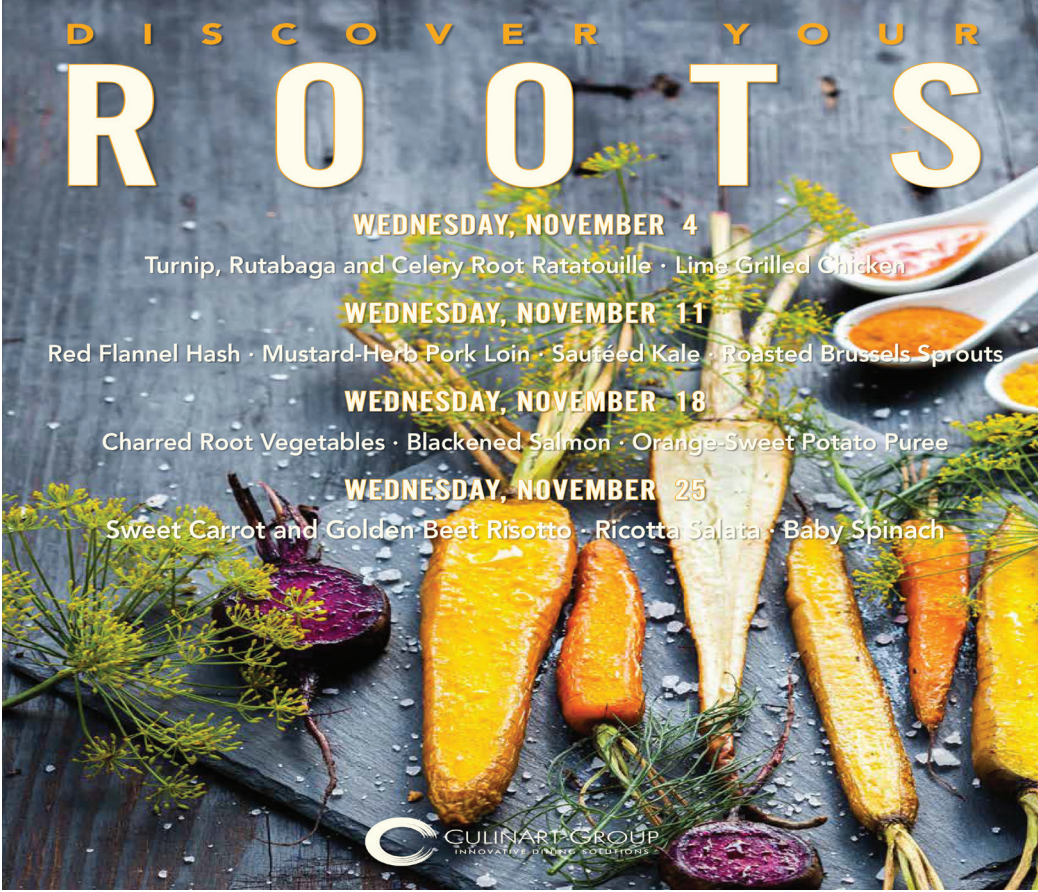
While the county has made every effort to keep taxes down, why then, as commu-

nity colleges continue to be overlooked, has the county’s correctional facility seen significant increases over the same period of time?

The county’s Department of Corrections has gone from being budgeted \$27 million in 2005 to receiving \$37 million in 2015—an increase of 37 percent.

“We’re funding prisons more than the colleges. Prisons are overcrowded and colleges are suffering. Why not flip that statistic, by redistributing the funds,” said Kelly.

“The answer is pretty simple: crime,” said Marseglia.





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Halloween

Halloween frightful fun hosted in Bucks County



Before make-up



After make-up

PHOTO CREDIT: TIA TRUSHEL

By: TIA TRUSHEL
Centurion Staff

With Halloween just around the corner, it is no secret that local farms such as Shady Brook and Active Acres are kicking off the fall season with some intriguing haunted attractions and gruesome characters, but what about the people behind the scenes? Shady Brook’s Horrorfest is being hosted every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday this month with attractions including an eerie adventure through the farm on the Hayride and Barn of Horror, an out-of-this-world experience at Alien Encounter, and in-your-face mayhem at Carnage. Meg Davis, of Southamp-

ton, has a fun time tapping into people’s fears as a clown in the hayride in a custom suit she designed and made herself. She also helps create the creepy creatures that haunt the farm, putting her touches on the eerie special effects make-up for the actors in the attractions. Working at Horrorfest for the past three years, she always keeps busy transforming about 15 to 20 actors each night into some horrifying creations. Atop her personal list of favorite transformations is the horror classic- the zombie! David explains briefly, “To make the zombie, I glue the prosthetic onto the person’s face, then I smooth out the edges using clear latex, after that we airbrush a

‘zombie’ color over him layering grey, green, and black, and finally I finish the look with blood.” Shady Brook is always adding something new for its anxious guests that dare to enter in the month of October and Davis has put in a helping hand by designing costumes as well as make-up for some of the new scenes added to the haunted hayride this year. This includes frontier women and costumes covered in blood for a new science area called “Source of Evil!” With all of this to juggle, Davis keeps coming back each year. She says, “My favorite thing about working at Horrorfest is being able to completely transform the actors, and mainly being able to

scare people!” After all, who wouldn’t want to get paid to scare people all night? Another Bucks County haunted farm is Active Acres which hosts Sleepy Hollow’s infamous Haunted Hayride, the equally thrilling Haunted House in the Hollow, and of course the horrifying Field of Fright! Devin Doe hm, 19, of Newtown, has worked at Sleepy Hollow, acting in the Haunted House, since the age of 14. Usually dressed as a bloody nurse or a demon, Doe hm takes people’s blood pressure before they walk into the horror ahead of them and has mainly acted in the house. In the past few years he has gotten into the special effects make-up, and helps to get

the actors prepared for their scenes in the house. Doe hm says, “My favorite part about working at Sleepy Hollow are the friends I have made there over the years.” Like Davis, Doe hm loves being able to scare people and looks forward to it. Whether you are a thrill seeker or just looking for some Halloween fun, these are the places to come experience for yourself. Shady Brook and Active Acres have been established as go-to attractions in the Bucks County area. For an evening filled with fun and fright that keeps you on your toes, be sure to witness your worst nightmares come to life. Happy Halloween!

Is Halloween trending or ending for Bucks students?

By: CRYSTAL STOUT
Centurion Staff

As Halloween draws ever closer, the crisp fall air has students thinking of pumpkins, costumes, and candy. For many college students, the beloved holiday is very different now than when they were young. Halloween has been celebrated around the world for thousands of years, changing all the while. The holiday that started as a Pagan tradition and was later adapted into a Christian celebration, has been modernized into the fun-filled festival that everyone knows and loves today. The most well-known staple of Halloween is, almost certainly, trick-or-treating. It’s a tradition that nearly every student took part in as a child. For many, dressing up as a favorite hero or spooky monster and receiving free candy is a treasured childhood memory, but as this generation has gotten older, this once all-important aspect has fallen out of the spotlight. Out of the 26 students surveyed, only four say they will be trick-or-treating for themselves this year. Most students reported that they gave up trick-or-treating around their early to mid-high school years. This was the case when, as Rachel Harris, 19, an illustration major at Bucks put it, “I figured out I could just buy my own candy without having to ask strangers for it.”

Gabe Infante, 20, a fine arts major explained, “I stopped at some point in high school when I realized it would just be easier to eat the leftover candy from my house.” Most students, it seems, stopped trick-or-treating around the same time. Chris Stiles, 21, a Computer Science & Information Technology major, said that as fewer and fewer of his friends went, he stopped as well, saying “We used to trick-or-treat with a large amount of people within the development, but they all grew up and they did other things. Soon it was really only me and brother so we stopped along with them... and tried having Halloween parties with friends instead, or just handed out candy at our grandparents.” Some said they will be going out with younger siblings or relatives, but will not be receiving their own candy. Others reported that after their younger siblings go out, they will then be taking that candy. Parents can be proud that their college-age students are putting their education to good use, finding ways to eliminate that pesky leg work of trick-or-treating. Younger siblings, however, may not be so thrilled. Even among the remaining student populace who will not be trick-or-treating, there is still an abundance of Halloween spirit. Some who are opting to stay in say that they will be dishing out the candy this year, in costume

or otherwise. Others will be participating in the growingly popular trend of Halloween parties. Stiles says he will be “holding a party with roommates and playing horror video games all night long... and decorating, and handing out candy to any that come knocking.” With spooky decorations, eery music, and Halloween-themed treats, it’s easy to see why these gatherings are becoming the most popular form of celebration among young adults who are finding themselves too old to trick-or-treat. Haunted house attractions, as well as haunted hayrides and corn mazes are other alternatives for those who are looking for Halloween thrills. Despite many feeling that they’ve outgrown trick-or-treating, it seems that dressing up for Halloween has not lost its appeal. There are drastically different approaches to this among college age students. Some opt for a simple approach, wearing whatever leftover costume still fits from last year, or donning a pair of cat ears and a tail. Others take the costume aspect of Halloween much more seriously, slaving away on handmade costumes for months or displaying professional level makeup skills to transform ordinary people into extraordinary Halloween creatures. Harris explains that “a lot of people who still dress up at this age can do a lot of serious costuming. It’s

a lot of fun to dress up and show off hard work that you put into a costume.” Costumes, be them complex or simplistic, fall across the spectrum from the extremely spooky, to elegant, to humorous. A few trends that have been growing in popularity recently have been zombies, or zombie versions of classic costumes, and superheroes. Students predict seeing many of these sorts of costumes around this year. Benjamin Woodring, 22, says that “I observe people wearing a lot more detailed costumes of

horror characters, superheroes seem to be popular, always have been, really.” With pop culture becoming so intertwined with society, students also predict seeing portrayals of characters from popular TV shows, movies, and comics. Also popular are gag costumes designed not to strike fear, but to evoke laughter. With a generation of clever and talented college students applying their creativity, this Halloween is guaranteed to be frightfully fun!



Halloween Decorations

PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Halloween

How old is too old to celebrate Halloween?



PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

BY: DIAMOND SCHULER
Centurion Staff

The question is, are college students too old to celebrate Halloween and trick or treat?

The answer is, no you're not too old to celebrate Halloween, but you are definitely too old to trick or treat without a small child accompanying you.

Of course we probably won't be as cute as the little girls in princess costumes and little boys dressed up like batman, but still, there's something about teens and adults with a little Halloween fun left in them. Plus, Halloween is an excuse for you to buy all your favorite candy!

In 2014, Fortune Magazine reported that \$1.4 billion was spent on adult Halloween costumes, compared to \$1.1

billion spent on children's costumes. These numbers alone prove that the spirit of Halloween is still alive for adults all over the country.

Sara Brooks, 21, Liberal Arts major from Richboro says, "I've always loved Halloween." She laughed and added, "It was a sad year when I realized I was too old to trick or treat, but now, being older, I realized there's a ton of cool things to do for Halloween, like go to parties and bars."

Halloween is often portrayed as a child's holiday, but over the years it has become heavily infiltrated by adults and teens everywhere. Haunted attractions such as Terror Behind the Walls at The Eastern State Penitentiary, and Frightfest at Six flags, all target older horror and

Halloween lovers.

Madison Wichman, 19, Criminal Justice major from Yardley said, "I just went to the Eastern State Penitentiary last week, and it was the scariest thing I've ever experienced in my life. I couldn't imagine going there as a kid. It is definitely better for teens and adults."

Living in Bucks County has its advantages during this time of year being only 30 minutes outside of the city. Halloween is a big deal in the city, and Philadelphia has the parties to prove it.

XFINITY Live is hosting their annual Halloween party, this year themed, "WICK-ED: 7 Evil Parties Under One Roof." The party runs from 8 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. on October 30. The Manayunk Brewery will also be hosting

their "Manayunk's Haunted Brewery Bash." The event will include \$500 in cash and prizes for those who show off their best costumes. The event is from 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. on Oct. 31.

If you're under 21 or the bar scene really isn't your style, there's bound to be a house party or frat party in the area, just begging for your attendance. Radwa Motelb, 19, Liberal arts major from Levittown talks about her Halloween plans.

"I have a lot of friends that go to Temple and they always have something going on up there. I'll most likely go there for Halloween and go to one of the hundreds of parties that will probably be happening," she stated.

Local colleges such as Temple, West Chester, and Drexel, are known for their big Halloween celebrations that attract students from other surrounding colleges and universities.

Roshad Martin, 20, undecided from Feasterville says, "I think no matter how old you are, Halloween is all about having fun and letting lose for one day. So you

should go out with friends and do something crazy. You only get one night to pretend to be anything you want to be!"

Halloween is the one time of year where you can literally pretend to be anything, though most people stick with the basics for costumes, it is okay to get a little creative and look for costume ideas on sites such as Pinterest and Instagram. However if you are lacking inspiration, the "Top 5 adult costumes for 2015" according to the National Retail Federation this year are: witch costumes, animals, Batman character, zombies, and Star Wars Characters.

Let's be honest though, most girls are going to stay true to the pop culture references from Mean Girls, and be a sexy bunny, kitten or mouse, and all the guys will be some type of firefighter, superhero, or jock. So clearly we lack originality.

The point is however, that here in America, you're never too old to celebrate Halloween, because adults love to unwind and pretend to be someone else just as much as kids do. So go out there and celebrate.



PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

CENTURIONS' CHOICE

T.V.

"Quantico" on ABC



"Quantico"

This show has been gaining attention over the past few weeks and the drama is truly heating up. If you haven't started watching yet, then you should get on board. The show takes place in flashback and present day focusing on an FBI agent that has been framed for a terrorist attack and now must solve the case of who the real attacker is before it's too late for her. This show is filled with sex, drama, and tons of action. A definite must watch

Movies

"Paranormal Activity the Ghost Dimension"



"Paranormal Activity the Ghost Dimension"

The "Panormal Activity" saga returns to the big screen with it's sixth installment in the series. A young couple, the Fleege's are celebrating their first Christmas in their new home. Upon discovering a camcorder - left behind by preivous tennants, they family soon learns that it has the ability to see aparitions, when their young daughter Leila (portaryed by Ivy George) makes a new imaginary friend.

Music

"Hello" by Adele



"Hello" by Adele

Adele has made another world class comeback. Her song "Hello" has already gained so much attention, and continues to play on repeat all over the world. This debut has been long awaited by Adele's millions of fans. She wrote a letter to her fans explaining what took her so long to release this and how much her fans mean to her. All in all this song will be a great addition to anyone's playlist.

Arts and Entertainment

“High Society” premieres at Walnut Street Theatre

By: **MELISSA COHEN**
Centurion Staff

For the very first production of the 2015-2016 Philadelphia Walnut Street Theatre season, the musical High Society was charming, romantic, adorable and humorous.

The musical High Society takes place in the year of 1938 in a wealthy estate in Oyster Bay and focuses on the eldest daughter, Tracy Lord, portrayed by Meghan Nichol Arnoldy, who is about to get married.

Commotion begins however, when she is re-visited by her ex-husband who is still madly in-love with her.

Dexter who was portrayed by Paul Schaefer, was a character that many audience members could relate to as the former husband of Tracy Lord, who still had unresolved feelings for her. .

Things don’t get easier, when a reporter and photographer for a magazine hold information regarding Tracy’s father, who is trying to hide his secrets from the public.

Megan Nicole Arnoldy, may not have been not have put a lot of personality into her lines, but her singing voice was beautiful and she was also very comfortable with her change in costumes.

In Act Two of the musical, Tracy wore an exquisite red gown, which she was able to jump on the table in the kitchen wearing, and dance with the rest of the cast.

Arnoldy also had great chemistry with every single one of her cast members, from her well -mannered fiancé George Kittridge played by Jon Reinhold to her estranged



Performers in “High Society”

PHOTO CREDIT: WALNUTSTREETTHEATRE.ORG

father Seth Lord, who was played by Dan Olmstead and her quiet and sweet, loving mother, Margaret who was played beautifully by Grace Gonglewski.

Indeed, her chemistry with Dexter, portrayed by Paul Schaefer was extremely realistic, beautiful, inspiring and romantic.

Paul Schaefer presented a charming, romantic and seductive middle-aged man onstage; and had the audience falling in love with him as he sang, “What Is This Thing Called Love?” and “Once Upon a Time.”

The acting, which was the strongest element in the show, created a lively, colorful and exciting plot, clever one liners and a realistic portrayal of how the rich live.

The performance would not have been complete however, without the ensemble cast members who played maids, butlers and cooks in the show. Every member knew the choreography and were in tune.

Though the plot was hilarious and the acting, singing and choreography was very strong, the confusing set designs took away from the rest of this production.

The story focused on a wealthy family in 1938, but the scene design before the curtain went up did not use the same colors that were used in the playbill: golds, blues, pinks, or lavender, which would be considered to be luxurious and rich colors to use for a production focusing on a wealthy family.

However, the scene

designs during the show did display these colors and white wicker pavilion chairs, rich colored furniture, a large swimming pool and even a tennis pavilion, to show off the wealth of the characters.

Since the story took place in June instead of Autumn, the use of colorful leaves covering the stage and a backdrop showing red flowers, green, yellow and orange leaves, made the setting confusing. This also kept the audience from feeling immersed in the world.

The set designs also did not do much for the Contemporary Theatre itself which is easily influenced by the physical aspects of the set on stage. If the scene designers would have used the gold, blue, pink and lavender colors

seen in the show’s playbill, the theatre would have more easily portrayed a wealthier class.

The lighting techniques were extremely realistic, with the use of small overhead spotlights to produce stars while the rest of the stage was dark, lights coming from lamps and chandeliers inside of the house and the use of natural light to show that the scene was happening during the day.

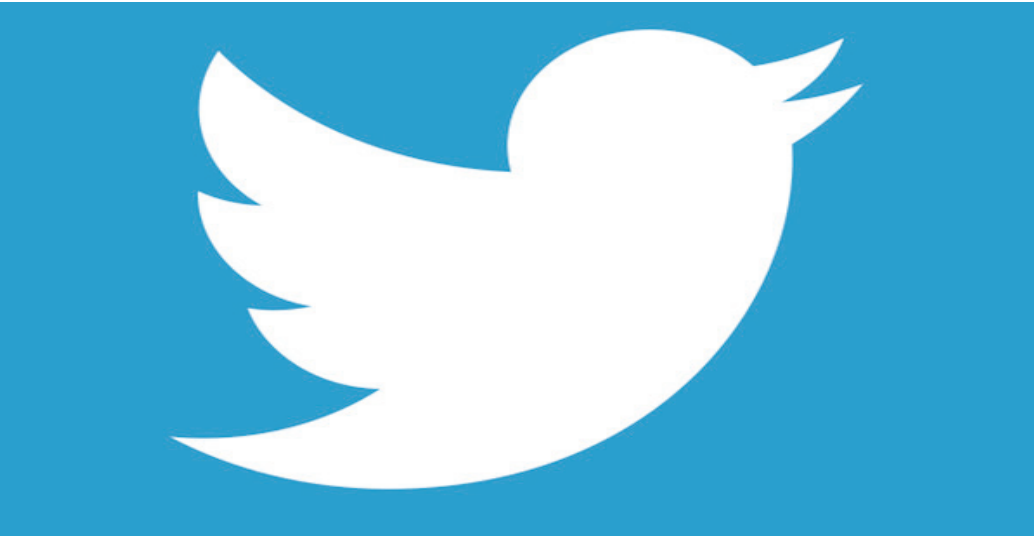
Each one of the characters were perfectly lit onstage as well and knew how to control their movements onstage so they would still be seen by the audience even if the lights were not on them.

The text was mostly created through words, costumes and lines, but this was not enough to present a strong production and one that the audience would have wanted to see again. Therefore, the limited number of props and the confusing set designs created a lot of confusion for the audience as well.

Instead of only using champagne glasses, wine bottles and a miniature boat, the visual elements of the production would have fit together seamlessly with the rest of the production.

This production was enjoyable to see due to the strong performances by each of the actors and actresses, the lighting techniques were strong and the elegant costume design. However, the show hindered in set design and other visual effects. I would recommend this show to anyone who is interested in a fun, romantic musical comedy.

Twitter looking to make a change



By: **RYAN HAYNES**
Centurion Staff

After nine years of financial and social success Twitter is flirting with the idea of altering their signature feature and allowing users to go beyond the 140-character limit.

In 2006, in the midst of the social media revolution, Jack Dorsey, an undergraduate student at New York University, pondered the idea of having a short messaging service (SMS) that would communicate to a small group of people through the internet.

He envisioned an interface that would provide the user a convenient look at what is going on around them through the use of concise status updates. His innovation spawned the popular social media site “Twitter.”

And at the core of his idea was a 140-character limit to the statuses, later dubbed a “tweets”, that forced users not only to be brief but to adapt to a new shorthand notation of internet slang. However, all of that may change.

It is still unclear whether or not the change would be

as simple as adding 10 to 20 characters or if it would entail more complex changes.

There have been some suggestions that a limit on characters will be eliminated altogether. This would be a radical change considering that brevity has been the website’s proverbial calling card since the beginning.

“To me, Twitter is a snapshot of information, and that’s why I like it. If the character limit was increased it would eliminate what I think is the purpose of Twitter,” says Maddie Parvin, 19, accounting major of Quakertown.

This is the most common issue with the proposed change. The definition, according to Dorsey, of the word ‘twitter’ is a, “short burst of inconsequential information.” To remove the character limit altogether would be taking the “short burst” out of the product; essentially retreating on their original mission.

Sabrina Petovic, 19, marketing major of Quakertown argues, “I think the point of twitter is to share short, to the point thoughts. If they increased the character limit it would be just like Facebook.”

Facebook provides a good forum for strong debate and detailed interaction; that aspect is non-existent on Twitter. By removing the character limit Twitter would be lending itself to a whole new style of discussion. That would be considered an advantage for the company.

Kristina Eck, 20, criminal justice major of Harleysville says, “I’m used to Twitter being so quick, I can update myself on a couple hours’ worth of news in a matter of seconds. On Facebook I feel like I’m sifting through so much and getting so little.”

To increase or eliminate the 140-character limit would be to cut ties with the most distinguishing aspect of Twitter, and for that very reason it seems like most users are opposed to this change.

On the flip side, Twitter is selling the idea as a way to give users more freedom and freshen up site; sacrificing the very principle that the site was built on is a decision that, good or bad, will alter the course of one of the most popular social networking sites forever.

The Influence of Kendrick Lamar



By: **JOHN GANNON**
Centurion Staff

Kendrick Lamar, a rap artist from the gang ridden streets of Compton, California is achieving more than just album sales.

He is becoming the one of the largest positive influences today but not just in music, this man is spreading love and peace in his rhymes and trying to be a role model to kids everywhere.

These days rap artists that spread messages similar to his are few and far between to say the least, and to be as popular as he is, is even more special. He raps about things like God, love, positivity, and self-acceptance, not many other rappers that can be put in that category.

In today’s world, rap music gets a bad reputation because of the stereotypes that a majority of rap artists fall into nowadays, and Kendrick has made it his goal to be a positive role model to the kids of our generation, and the next generations to come.

Jackson, 22, Bensalem, talks about his influence on him, “He taught me it’s cool to be me and not let people pressure me into stuff.”

Kendrick has influence on

people everywhere, no matter where you’re from, it’s truly amazing how a little positivity can make people so happy.

Nick Kaiser, 19, from Holland said, “The song ‘I’ changed my life completely, it taught me how to find love for myself and to love who I am.”

With many comparisons to guys like Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Michael Jackson, and even Nelson Mandela, Kendrick has taken this sense of power and is making the best of it. The #BlackLivesMatter campaign on twitter and elsewhere is a perfect example, Kendrick has become an activist for it through his music.

In his song “Alright” he spreads the message of positivity and that no matter how tough times get, things will always get better if you keep a positive attitude.

Lamar is revitalizing music as a form of protest and disproving notions that hip-hop poses a danger to society.

In his music he talks about loving yourself, and staying positive even in the hardest of times and with that, things will always get better if you keep a positive attitude.

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Dr. Rolf Mayrhofer, Professor of Chemistry

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