



Dear MCLA Student,

Welcome back! Whether you have been working, interning, studying, traveling, or simply relaxing, I hope you had a great summer! In a few short days you will be on campus again and classes will begin, so I am writing to you today on behalf of all MCLA faculty and staff to tell you how much we look forward to your arrival back on campus and to share some information about some things that have been happening this summer that I hope will be helpful.

Last spring we administered the RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory and over 32% of our students completed the survey and shared their thoughts about what is important to them and how satisfied they are with their experiences as an MCLA student. I want you to know that we heard you and that many people on campus spent a lot of time this summer working to address concerns that you and your peers shared with us. Once you return to campus you will receive a message which includes access to all of the results and information, including several opportunities for you to attend open sessions to hear more about the results and some of the longer term plans to improve your experience. Hopefully you will see in this message the results of some immediate actions that have been taken.

Please don't hesitate to reply to this email directly if I can be of any assistance as you prepare for the start of the semester. And please seek me out in person during the fall - I am looking forward to seeing familiar faces and meeting students I don't already know! I would love to hear about your summer!

Warmly,

Catherine Holbrook
Vice President of Student Affairs

Welcome Back Tent

During the first week of classes, from September 4 through September 10, we will be hosting a Welcome/Welcome Back Tent on the academic quad (rain location is Bowman Hall lobby) every day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Staff and faculty from across campus will be there to answer questions, share information, and assist you in any way possible as you start the fall semester. There will be free coffee and tea, contests with prizes, giveaways, and various activities each day. Please stop by to grab a cup of coffee and visit with the MCLA community members staffing the tent between your classes. Let us know how we may be able to help you!

September Events of Note

Mount Greylock Hike – September 7 (Rain date: Sept. 8)

The annual hike to the summit of Mt. Greylock has been a part of MCLA tradition since the College's early days and a part of Welcome Week for over 20 years. But the event is not just open to new students! We would love to have any student who is interested in joining us participate, particularly if you didn't participate during your first year and would like to the opportunity to climb Mount Greylock before you graduate.

This year's hike will take place on Saturday, September 7, with Sunday, September 8, as the rain date. Buses will depart at 9 a.m. and return in the early afternoon. We encourage students who have hiked previously and enjoy a vigorous hike to sign up for this event. Be sure you wear comfortable, casual clothing suitable for an outdoor hike, and comfortable, sturdy shoes (such as sneakers or hiking boots that are well broken in). A complete list of what to wear and bring, and tips for the hike, can be found at the link above along with the registration form.

President's Ice Cream Social and SGA Activities Fair – September 12 (Raindate: September 19)

On Thursday, September 12, the MCLA community will come together for the annual President's Ice Cream Social and the Student Government Association's Activities Fair on the Academic Quad. This year's event promises to be even bigger and better than last year's! Ice cream will be served from noon to 2 p.m., while a variety of interactive activities will take place from noon to 4 p.m., courtesy of the President's Office. SGA clubs and organizations, along with other campus groups, will be present with table displays to share info on what they do and take sign-ups. Come for the ice cream, stay for the clubs, laser tag, photo booth, giveaways and more!

Student Activities Council (SAC) September Programming

In keeping with SAC's tradition of providing an event every Saturday night. Below is a list of SAC's September events. You can stay up to date with what's happening on campus by downloading and using the MCLA Events app by following the instructions below.

Sat., 9/7	6:30-9:30 p.m.	SAC Salute to SummerFest	Quad/Venable Gym
Thurs., 9/13	2 p.m.	Big E Destination Trip **	Off Campus via bus
Sat., 9/14	8-10 p.m.	Water Balloon Glow Volleyball	Taconic Sand Court
Sat., 9/21	8-10 p.m.	Lauren Faber!! Comedian	Sullivan Lounge
Sat. 9/28	8-10 p.m.	S'mores over the Campfire	Bond St Dirt Lot

** Sign-ups are limited and will happen at the September 7 Welcome SummerFest.

MCLA Events App (Presence)

If you want to be in the loop about what's going on campus, download the MCLA Event App via your app store by searching for "MCLA events." This app will give you information about events occurring in the next 30 days. Simply click any event of interest for more details and save events you want to attend directly to your calendar. The desktop version of this program (found at the above link) allows you to search for all events in the future and to find out more about any student organization, including when and where they meet during the year.

Convocation, One of Our Favorite Traditions

As you know, Convocation symbolizes the official beginning of a student's academic career at the college and their acceptance into our community. It is a time when we gather together to welcome new students into our community, and instill the value of your education and the significance of being part of a community of learners, where knowledge and scholarship are valued.

Convocation is a time to celebrate and we invite YOU to join us in celebrating all our new students at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, September 3, if you are available to do so!

Construction Updates

You have probably heard about our construction plans for the Campus Center over the last year or so, and perhaps wondered when they would actually start or if you would still be here to see the results. Well, we are very excited to tell you that this summer saw a burst of activity that will be very noticeable when you arrive back on campus! Some highlights are featured below, including some changes in the Freel Library as well.

Campus Center: The Campus Center is undergoing a major, multi-phase renovation designed to enhance student spaces and the student experience. Phase 1 of the project, which started this summer, will be close to completion when you return next week and features major renovations to the Centennial Dining Room, with new furniture arriving over the next few weeks. Not only has this project dramatically improved the appearance and atmosphere of the dining room, but it has also enabled Dining Services to make some needed improvements to the menu, as students have requested. This includes the ability to provide a more varied menu, a dedicated gluten-free zone, and vegan entrees at every meal. In addition, a plan to improve healthy options at every meal will feature an improved salad bar and more fresh fruit at every meal. Finally, Dining Services has started a Food Committee of faculty, staff and students that will meet every other week during the year to allow for ongoing improvements in a timely manner. If you are interested in making the commitment to join this group, please email J.Dydowicz@mcla.edu, or simply use the feedback boards in the Centennial Room if you don't have time to be part of the food committee.

Phase II of the renovation project was also started this summer and will be ongoing throughout the academic year. When it is complete, we will be opening a brand new, state-of-the-art fitness center with an elevated walking track, and a reorganization of Athletics offices and related sports medicine functions. It will also allow for a pass-through on the second floor through the Centennial Room that is currently not an option.

As exciting as all this is, the projects necessitate some temporary inconveniences, which include the *closure of all the Campus Center entrances located on Montana Street as well as many of the hallways and access points in that south portion of the building*. There will also be less parking available on campus this year because the Bond Street parking lot is closed to all but our construction crew and their vehicles. We apologize for this inconvenience and thank you for your patience as we work to improve campus for everyone.

Freel Library: In last spring's surveys, students overwhelmingly told us that the Freel Library was one of their favorite places on campus and that the staff in the Library were among the most caring and helpful on campus. We hope that the changes that Freel Library has undergone this summer will only enhance these feelings! The most obvious change is an updated first floor (the Learning Commons) that includes three group study rooms, new flexible furniture, a graphic novel section, counter seating in the lounge, and more. We've also moved the reference desk, spruced up the Children's Room a bit, and added new e-book and streaming video packages for your academic and personal use. Stop by, check it out, and let Associate Dean Emily Alling and her staff know what you think!

Services and Resources for Students

MCLA provides many services and resources to help you be successful academically, personally and socially. While you may be aware of most of these, I wanted to include information below about some services that all students should be aware of and freely take advantage of as necessary:

- [Counseling Services](#): The college years can be among the most exciting and rewarding of a person's life. However, often times, they can also be the most stressful, confusing, and uncertain. You will probably feel this way at some point, and you will not be alone. Many students need additional encouragement and support during these times. Counseling Services is available to provide students with the help and guidance they need to achieve personal and academic success. Counseling services are free, confidential, and available to all currently enrolled students. Students are seen by appointment only except in certain cases of emergency. Appointments can be made by visiting the office Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., on the second Floor of the MountainOne Student Wellness Center. For more information, please check the website—also, like the MCLA Wellness Center page on Facebook.
- [Health Services](#): The Health Services team provides health care for all MCLA students Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., while classes are in session. It is also located in the MountainOne Student Wellness Center, on the first floor. Students are allowed unlimited visits with a Health Services provider at no charge for services provided, including gynecological assessments. No appointments are required; visits are on a walk-in basis. Necessary referrals to off-campus specialists can be arranged through the office.
- [Center for Student Success and Engagement](#): The mission of the Center for Student Success and Engagement (CSSE) is to empower MCLA students with knowledge, guidance, and resources so they can make the most of their college experience. Services include academic support, career services, disability resources, advising, study away, and academic coaching. As you continue your education, we encourage you to visit Career Services early and often to discuss internships or your future job search, and to seriously consider whether study away is possible for you.
- [MERC](#): The Multicultural Education Resource Center encourages cross-cultural relations, student empowerment, and leadership especially for ALANA, international, and veteran students. Connecting students with successful peers, faculty, and community members helps students envision and realize their goals. This year we welcome a new staff member to lead MERC. Arlene Theodore joined us this summer as the new Associate Director of Diversity Programming and MERC. Stop by and meet Arlene!
- [Identity & Gender Equality Resource Center](#): The Identity & Gender Equality Resource Center (IGE) actively fosters the academic success and personal growth of LGBTQIA+ students, and offers college-wide services to enhance the campus community's understanding and appreciation of LGBTQIA+ people.
- [Women's Center](#): The Susan B. Anthony Women's Center provides education, resources and activities to empower men, women and non-binary individuals to stand together against oppression and develop a deeper understanding of the multiple dimensions of feminism.
- **Student Handbook**: Each year MCLA publishes its student handbook, which serves as a useful resource to guide you along the way with important information about your rights and responsibilities as an MCLA community member, co-curricular activities, details on policies and procedures, as well as a listing of those to contact for specific concerns or questions. You will receive an electronic copy of the 2019-2020 handbook, which has been expanded to include more information for you in one place, via email at the start of the semester.
- [Transportation](#): This link provides you with information about local transportation options in North Adams and the surrounding area.

Additional Resources for Students Who Need Them

We realize that there are a variety of challenges outside the classroom that can impact a student's success or well-being, including food insecurity or financial emergencies.

- **MCLA Food Pantry:** The MCLA Food Pantry provides non-perishables, frozen prepared meals, snacks, instant meals, toiletries, and information on local resources and programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). The Food Pantry is located on the second floor of the Amsler Campus Center and is open to anyone with an MCLA I.D. This resource was created by and is staffed by students in a confidential manner. We invite you to visit and access the food resources in the pantry just like any other resource on campus. There are also two smaller pantries with non-perishables located in the library and the commuter lounge.
- **Charlotte Degen Emergency Fund:** The Charlotte Degen Emergency Fund was established to assist students who have a short term, emergency financial need that is negatively impacting their ability to engage their education here at MCLA. For more information, follow this link or contact the Vice President for Student Affairs (me!) at 413-662-5231.
- **Single Point of Contact (SPOC):** Assistant Dean Celia Norcross is MCLA's SPOC and stands ready to assist any student who is facing issues of chronic homelessness or food insecurity in connecting with campus and local resources to address individual needs. Dean Norcross can be reached at 413-662-5231.
- **Student Affairs Office:** The Student Affairs office staff stands ready to assist any student in need who is unsure where to go or what resources are available to them. Our office is located in room 305 in the Amsler Campus Center and we have an open door policy – Dean Norcross, April Wright, and I are all happy to help! Someone is always available when the office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can stop by, call us at 413-662-5231, or email (my address is in this message).

Safety and Security

Your safety and sense of security on campus is very important to us. I wanted to share some information about the services provided to help maintain a safe campus and the resources available to you should you need them.

- [Campus Police](#): The Campus Police – Public Safety Department is dedicated to keeping the MCLA campus and community safe, 24/7/365. Department personnel are sworn, warranted, armed officers who patrol the campus regularly and are certified first responders. This department is trained in emergency response, provides campus education programs, and issues emergency alerts and other notifications as needed in accordance with the Clery Act. The officers provide first responder medical assistance on campus and we recommend you program your cell phone with their emergency number in the event you should need them. The MCLA Emergency # is 413-662-5100. Please review the link above for complete details about this valuable resource.
- [Emergency Notifications](#): MCLA's electronic emergency notification system allows all community members who register their emergency contact information to receive notification of about a campus emergency or other urgent issue quickly and seamlessly. Follow the link above to sign up, if you have not done so already, and to learn more about emergency notifications.
- [Title IX Coordinator](#) – MCLA is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy learning, living, and working environment where all forms of sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, dating and domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation are strictly prohibited. To [report](#) any of these prohibited behaviors, you may contact our Title IX Coordinator Nicole Comstock (413-662-5571) directly or use any of the other procedures outlined at this link.

- [Bias Reporting](#): MCLA's Chief Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator have developed a Bias Reporting Protocol intended to assist those who may have experienced an incident of bias and help to inform and educate the community as we work to provide a safe and welcoming campus environment.
- [Rave/Guardian App](#): Rave Guardian allows your cell phone to be a personal safety device. With this app provided through MCLA, you can stay connected to the campus safety network, immediately connect with MCLA campus police, and even submit anonymous tips that can help make the campus even safer. Download the app at your app store.
- [Preferred Name/Pronouns Change](#): Any community member wishing to use a name or pronoun different from their legal ones to identify themselves may do so by completing a request for change either in Self-Service Banner or via use of the [change form](#).
- [All Gender Restrooms](#): MCLA affirms the rights of all members of the community to use the restroom that best fits their gender identity or expression, whether it be a gender-specific or all-gender restroom. A complete list of all gender restrooms, with a campus map, can be found at the link above.

Are you a Resident Student? *Below is information specifically for resident students.*

- You should have already received information about **move-in for returning** students from Residential Programs & Services (RPS) via email. If you have not, please contact the department at 413-662-5249.
- Over the summer there have been some staff changes and moves in the residence areas that we want to share with you. Griffin Labbanca left MCLA to take a teaching position locally at one of North Adams elementary schools and we wish him well! Adrianna Segura has moved to the Flagg Townhouses and will serve as your residence director if you live in Flagg. Rachel Kristoff joined us in July and will serve as the Hoosac Hall residence director. Finally, Brendan Cody will once again serve as the residence director in Berkshire Towers.
- [Parking regulations](#) are relaxed for the first week of the semester to accommodate student move-in, but all resident students will need to have a parking decal to maintain a car on campus. If you have already been awarded a decal as part of last fall's housing process, remember to pick it up by the deadlines shared with you by RPS. Any unclaimed decals will go into the parking lottery for those resident students wishing to have a car on campus this semester. Resident parking decals are limited and not guaranteed to all students; please contact RPS for more information on the lottery process. Check the link above for more information on resident lots and regulations. And as a reminder, the Bond Street lot will not be available this year due to our ongoing construction to improve the campus.

Are you a Commuter Student? As a reminder, all MCLA Services are available to our commuting students, except those specifically found in residence areas. However, *below is information specifically for commuter students.*

- [Parking regulations](#) are relaxed for the first week of the semester to accommodate new students and the move-in process. If you plan to drive to campus, you must get a commuter parking permit through the Department of Public Safety - Campus Police. Permits are issued on a first come, first served basis, and cost \$30 a semester. You must show your car registration, valid college ID, and a driver's license. Check the link above for more information on commuter lots and regulations.
- [Commuter Services](#) operates the Commuter Lounge in Venable Hall, plans commuter gatherings, and is staffed with students who are available to help you connect on campus. Contact Natty.Burfield@mcla.edu if you need assistance or information.
- There are a number of spaces that are popular with commuters for studying or socializing on campus. You can find a list of these locations on the [Commuter Services](#) webpage.

- Despite our beautiful weather now, inclement weather cancellations or delays are a fact of life in the Berkshires, as you know from last year. We understand that this can be challenging for you as a commuting student, particularly if the weather is not severe enough to result in a cancellation of classes and or college closing. Only you can determine if it is safe for you to come to campus in the event of inclement weather, which often affects our commuting region differently with each storm. Therefore, if classes are not cancelled, but you feel unsafe driving, use your best judgment at all times and alert your faculty to your own unique commuting challenges. Since they also need to commute to campus, most should understand your predicament provided you make up any lost work. The complete list of radio and TV stations that list MCLA weather-related notifications can be found on the [Commuter Services](#) webpage, but the fastest way to get these notifications is to register for emergency notifications on the Banner Self-Service page.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE

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