



Dear New Student,

Welcome to MCLA! I hope you are as excited to start your first year at MCLA as we are to have you join our community!

Fall has always been my favorite season. As a student, I was excited about the new school year and what it would bring. It remains my favorite season now because it's the time we get to welcome YOU—and all our new students—as you begin your college journey. In a few short days you will be on campus 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 getting to know you, helping you transition to life at MCLA during your first year here, and to ensuring that *your* MCLA experience is all you hope it will be.

In addition to welcoming you, this message is intended to provide you with some important information about beginning of semester activities and important resources and services you may find helpful. 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 when you get here. I am looking forward to meeting you.

Warmly,

Catherine Holbrook
Vice President of Student Affairs

Welcome Week– September 1-7

[Welcome Week](#) is a program designed for all new students as part of your orientation and transition to MCLA. The purpose of the program is to help all new students make connections—with peers, with faculty and staff, and with the many offices, student organizations and services that will help make your education successful and empower you to make your own impression on the world. All new students — residents and commuters, first year students and transfers—are encouraged to participate! The first program for all new students begins at 9 a.m. on Monday, September 2. The [complete schedule](#) can be found here.

[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. 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. 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

SAC is a student organization that provides entertainment on campus, including 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

If you want to be in the loop about what’s going on 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

Convocation symbolizes the official beginning of your academic career at the college and your 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.

As part of Convocation, you will walk through the College gates. These gates are opened only twice a year. You will pass through at Convocation and again at Commencement when you conclude your academic career at MCLA. Faculty, staff, administrators, and College trustees in full academic regalia are there to show commitment to our new members of the MCLA community. Convocation is a time to celebrate. We celebrate the excitement of a new academic year as we welcome you.

Peer Mentors

You don't have to navigate the first year of college alone. MCLA's First Year Experience team has designed a program that will support you as you move toward your sophomore year. Through this program you will gain skills and knowledge about yourself as you explore the 8 Dimensions of Wellness, led by Peer Mentors, students who were just like you not so long ago. Peer Mentors will introduce you to college life through our Welcome Week with sessions designed to get you ready for the first weeks of classes and life as a college student. As the semester progresses, you will quickly learn how your life is tied to the 8 Dimensions of Wellness and how they can help guide your growth throughout your college years and beyond.

Each week your Peer Mentor will have exciting opportunities for you to engage in conversation, learn from other peers as well as guest speakers, and create connections to resources on campus that can aid in your success as you attend fun events. Peer Mentor groups are created by course selection and student majors, creating an instant connection to academics from the start. These students are excited to begin this journey with you and they look forward to meeting you in just a few days!

[Getting Started with Technology - TechHelp](#)

The technology "Getting Started" guide is a comprehensive resource that walks you through the steps you should take to prepare for using technology services at MCLA. This guide will walk you through setting up the online accounts that you will use as an MCLA student. This includes your Banner account, which is where you can access your student record. It also includes how to setup your MyMCLA account, which allows you access into the MyMCLA Portal. The MyMCLA Portal is where you can access online resources such as your MCLA email, Canvas (our learning management system), and library databases. Please take some time to read the information on this technology guide to setup your accounts and familiarize yourself with these online technology services. If you have any questions or need help, please contact the Tech Help Desk at (413)-662-5276.

Construction Updates

We are very excited about the construction happening on campus that you may have seen when you visited campus this summer. Some highlights are featured below:

Campus Center: The Campus Center is undergoing a major, multi-phase renovation designed to enhance student spaces and the student experience. Phase I of the project, started this summer, will be close to completion when you get here. This phase of the project features major renovations to the Centennial Dining Room, improving both its appearance and Dining Services' ability to provide a more varied menu, dedicated gluten-free zone, and vegan entrees at every meal. The new furniture will be arriving over the next few weeks, but the new program will begin with your first meal on September 1.

Phase II 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.

As exciting as 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:](#) Freel Library has undergone many changes this summer! The most obvious 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 ebook and streaming video packages for your academic and personal use. Stop by and check it out!

Services and Resources for Students

MCLA provides many services and resources to help you be successful academically, personally and socially. While not comprehensive, the information below is intended to remind you about some services that all new students should be aware of from the start:

- **[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.
- **[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.
- **[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 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 – or just connect with you as you transition to campus! Someone is always available when the office is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 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. 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, 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 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 a **move-in date and time** from Residential Programs & Services (RPS) via email. If you have not, please contact the department at 413-662-5249.
- The first meal on the dining plan served to new resident students will be lunch on September 1, which will be the first meal served in our renovated Centennial Room. As you move in, your family members will be able to get a guest pass to lunch at the Family Photo Booth if they wish to dine on campus rather than in town at one of the local restaurants.
- [Meal Plans](#): All new students with a residency requirement are required to have a meal plan for the duration of their requirement. New first year students have a three-year requirement, while the residency requirement for transfers is assigned by Admissions based on credit hours transferred in. For more on the meal plans, click the link above.
- [Parking regulations](#) are relaxed for the first week of the semester to accommodate new students and move-in, but all resident students who wish to have a car on campus will need to register for the parking lottery. Resident parking decals are limited and not guaranteed to all resident students; please contact RPS for more information on the lottery process. Check the link above for more information on resident lots and regulations.

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

- [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 as you acclimate to commuting to campus.

- 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. 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. Also, please remember that only you can determine if it is safe for you to come to campus, so 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.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE

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