

Know the Protocol, Know Your Rights College Community Addresses Concerns About ICE

By Desiree Leader
STAFF WRITER

Many people at the Mount are expressing concern regarding President Trump’s lift on the 2011 directive which prohibited Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents from arresting suspected undocumented immigrants in sensitive places, such as schools and churches. On January 30th, MWCC President Vander Hooven sent out a memo sharing the previously established protocol in case of a visit to the school from outside law enforcement. The memo advised students and staff to refer outside law enforcement officers like ICE to the President immediately. Two weeks later, the college gave the greenlight for on-campus distribution of the “red card,” an informational document on legal and constitutionally protected rights.

The protocol also said, “MWCC police officers and security personnel do not hold, arrest, or detain ...on the belief that the individual is not a legal resident...or is in violation of a civil immigration law.” At a special meeting of the Board of Trustees, Campus Police Chief Melissa Croteau said that campus police cannot block ICE officials,

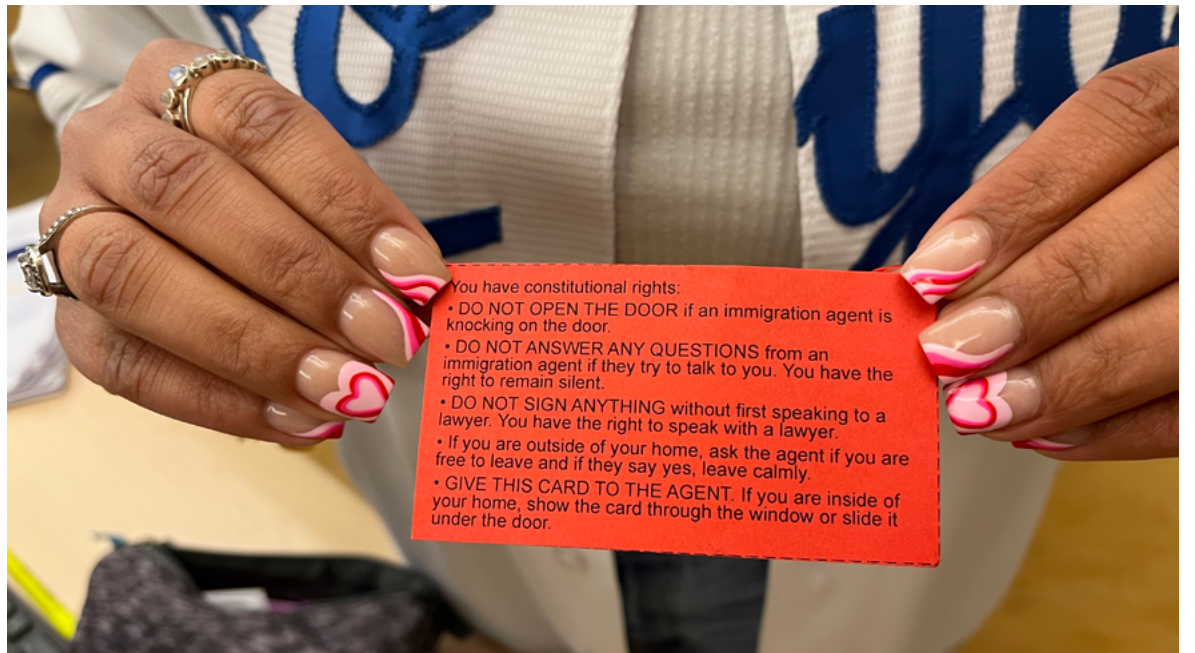
but reported that her “focus is not on immigration status,” while reiterating the protocol of going to the President first.

On February 4th, at a special meeting called by the trustees, President Vander Hooven stated that, “I want to emphasize that our commitment to...serve our students with dignity and respect is unwavering.”

A student majoring in Human Services who declined sharing their name, was surprised that the ‘red cards’ which inform people of their rights regarding ICE were not available at the school until two weeks after the change in the status of the policy. “Being informed as much as possible is what’s gonna help...

when people know exactly what their rights are it helps ease the situation. It won’t fix it, but it will make people feel more at ease,” especially the card’s information on the constitutional right to remain silent.

She went on to say that while she has filed papers with immigration and is just waiting for everything to go through, “It’s really scary out there.” She shared that she knows people who are afraid to go to work or are afraid to send their children to school. “It’s so sad.” This student said that as a child she had difficulties learning



A “red card”, modeled by a student, listing rights and suggested protocols regarding ICE agents. These can be obtained on-campus through the SGA and the Brewer Center.

Photo by Tom Hill Jr.

because she was afraid that her parents would be deported while she was in school.

People in her community are quick to share when they see an immigration officer, to help keep each other safe. She also keeps an eye on information and links on Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) website.

She mentioned that she feels protected at school right now, especially due to the resources available at the Brewer Center.

“The Brewer Center is a spot for people to gather and talk and to just know that we support

them and we are advocating for them and we are trying to stay as up to date as we can on the executive orders... so we can really explain how they are impacting the students directly,” said Brewer Center staff assistant, Kate Bosworth.

The Brewer Center also has a suggestion box, collecting people’s feelings about the executive orders, and will do a public reading of those cards at some point in March. They also have on hand a list of what the executive orders are, along with paraphrased versions for better understanding.

According to Wren Stoddard, Student Leader in Civic Engagement at The Brewer Center, as well as the SGA President, “A lot of the younger students, too, have been coming in...it is great to see them wanting to be engaged in the community around them, but it’s also really upsetting to see them as upset as they are about what we are going through, right now, as a nation. I personally just want to offer as much emotional support as I can give them.”

Stoddard also noted that

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“ICE Protocol and Rights” >>>

You have constitutional rights:
• DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR if an immigration agent is knocking on the door.
• DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS from an immigration agent if they try to talk to you. You have the right to remain silent.
• DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING without first speaking to a lawyer. You have the right to speak with a lawyer.
• If you are outside of your home, ask the agent if you are free to leave and if they say yes, leave calmly.
• GIVE THIS CARD TO THE AGENT. If you are inside of your home, show the card through the window or slide it under the door.

Usted tiene derechos constitucionales:
• NO ABRA LA PUERTA si un agente de inmigración está tocando la puerta.
• NO CONTESTE NINGUNA PREGUNTA de un agente de inmigración si trata de hablar con usted. Usted tiene el derecho a guardar silencio.
• NO FIRME NADA sin antes hablar con un abogado. Usted tiene el derecho de hablar con un abogado.
• Si usted está fuera de su casa, pregúntele al agente si tiene la libertad de irse y si le dice que sí, váyase con tranquilidad.
• ENTRÉGUELE ESTA TARJETA EL AGENTE. Si usted está dentro de su casa, muestre la tarjeta por la ventana o pásela debajo de la puerta.

I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.

I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door.

I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings based on my 4th Amendment rights.
I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

These cards are available to citizens and noncitizens alike.

I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.

I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door.

I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings based on my 4th Amendment rights.
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These cards are available to citizens and noncitizens alike.

Examples of the ILRC “red cards” in both English and Spanish.

Images from the ILRC website: <https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards-tarjetas-rojas>

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Out with the Old and In with the New

The Mountain Lion Gets a Makeover Courtesy of Hired Graphic Design Firm School Branding Agency

By *Jordan Chila*
EDITOR-IN CHIEF

MWCC started the process of implementing a new mascot in the fall of 2024 with a vision that embodied the school's mission. Students and faculty were asked to vote on various animals and in the end the mountain lion stuck. However, it did receive a makeover. MWCC Marketing department hired the design firm School Branding Agency to create three options that students voted on between January 27th and 30th. Phase 3 is soon approaching.

The results for the new mascot design were announced February 5, 2025. Design option 1 will be the new face of the school. According to the marketing

department, 576 people voted and of those 70% were students. Stephanie England, Director of Marketing, weighed in on student response. She comments, "As of January 30, over 300 students have participated in the voting process, showing just how much they care about shaping MWCC's mascot."

While faculty input is used, the process of generating a new mascot has solely relied on student input it seems. When asked if England had cast a vote on the new mascot design, she said she didn't. "I have chosen not to cast a vote myself. While I may have personal preferences, I believe it's essential for the student voice to take precedence

in my opinion," states England.

While marketing did hope to prioritize student input, Science Major, Jay Morris, did express feelings about an outside firm creating the design options. Morris supports Marty being rebranded to give the mascot "meaning" but he does wish students input could have been better reflected in the designs. Morris comments, "I wish students got to design the mascot as it represents the college and its students."

What's next in this process? It's phase 3, where students and faculty will determine the name of the next mountain lion. Marty could be receiving a new name. Benjamin Heffner, Dual Enrollment Student, gives his



The new design for the Mountain Lion mascot.

Image from MWCC

opinion on the subject. Heffner says "Personally I still like the name Marty. It has a nice ring to it." Once the name is confirmed then the final stage of moving the mascot's representation will be underway.

England has clarified that once the final designs are implemented

through "guidelines," the marketing department's goal is to have the mascot presented soon. "...students can see their chosen mascot come to life before the summer months," Comments England. Keep your eyes peeled for the next phase and for the future MWCC mascot.

ESL and ELL Students at MWCC are Making a Significant Impact

By *Régulo Moreno*
ASSISTANT EDITOR

English as a second language (ESL) students at MWCC significantly impact the college, other students, their families, and the local economy. Their language skills and cultural knowledge can benefit local businesses and industries; strengthening the region's economy, particularly in areas like Gardner and Leominster.

Professor Bolaños, Associate Professor of ESL, said, "Being bilingual isn't just a cool skill to have - it's a major advantage in today's job market." With one out of three students speaking a language other than English, the campus is buzzing with linguistic and cultural diversity. Through specialized programs like ESL for Business and ESL for the Medical Field, MWCC tailors language learning to meet specific professional needs, allowing students to transform bilingualism into a tool for success.

The 2023 census reports



The ESOL Adult Education program is located at the MWCC Leominster campus.

Photo from MWCC

that out of Massachusetts' 7 million residents, 20,000 live in Gardner, and 43,000 reside in Leominster. In Gardner, 8.3% of the population identifies as Latino or Hispanic, while in Leominster, that figure rises to 13.9%. This growing diversity presents a valuable opportunity for local businesses to better serve a broader customer base

and expand into new markets. Companies can enhance community engagement, improve customer experience, and drive economic growth by employing multilingual staff.

In addition, Bolaños mentions that MWCC's innovative programs reflect this diversity. In the fall of 2024, the college launched a new Dual Language

Program tailored for students interested in preschool education. This program has 15 enrolled students, each benefiting from a curriculum combining professional training and language development. "We are proud to collaborate with Empower Children," says Bolaños.

Empower Children for Success is a non-profit organization that funds programs for students aspiring to start childcare businesses. Their support has been instrumental in helping participants achieve the English proficiency necessary to succeed as entrepreneurs in the early childhood education field.

Looking ahead, Bolaños was excited to give share the scoop on the upcoming introduction of a Spanish for Heritage Speakers course next year at MWCC. This course specifically supports English-speaking students, especially those from Hispanic backgrounds. In rekindling their cultural roots, they will improve their Spanish skills

and strengthen connections with family members who may not speak English.

While ESL programs often focus on short-term goals, MWCC recognizes that language learning is lifelong. "I humbly consider myself a lifelong English language learner (ELL) because learning a language never truly ends. As technology and sociolinguistic changes evolve, so does the opportunity to learn and grow in language skills," shared Bolaños.

Language is a gateway to limitless opportunities, fostering confidence, resilience, and pride in linguistic abilities. Mastering multiple languages is more than a skill—it is a transformative asset that unites people, strengthens communities, and opens doors to success. Embracing linguistic diversity empowers individuals to reach their full potential and emerge as leaders in a globally connected world.



Fractured Focus: Tech and Time Management

By **Melanie Trottier-Mitcheson**

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Social media, emails, texts, news, AI, games: access to technology can be a daily source of distraction. Mount students reveal their strategies to stay focused.

The typical college student's routine day is punctuated by a series of buzzes, pings, and alarms from a device. This barrage of digital noise, studies show, takes a toll on human attention spans. University of Texas at Austin professor and writer Steven Mintz quotes a Microsoft study finding that the average human attention span decreased from 12 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2013. Humans now pay attention for a shorter time than a goldfish.

Student Ian Dolan puts his phone on Do Not Disturb during class. "I like to think I won't get distracted, but if I hear the



Photo by Marvin Meyer from Unsplash

buzz, I might," he admits. The average digital user receives 80 or more notifications per day and consults their screens between 80 and 160 times. "The worst thing is that the brain gets used to notifications" and normalizes them, according to Sara Williams, Director of Advising & Student SUCCESS. "We get used to living on high alert." Although she acknowledges

it is challenging for students (especially those who are parents) Williams stresses the importance of managing notifications "so they're not disrupting you from being present and in class."

In order to prioritize, marketing student Jessica Lee relies on lists which she composes in her Notes app, to stay on task. "I never put the biggest task first or at the end," she shares. Lee starts

with an easier task as a warm-up before diving into the harder work. Robert Mayer, Head of Veterans Services, is also a fan of the written to-do list ("I'm old-school") aided by technology: when he wakes up at night is away from the office but afraid of forgetting something important, he sends himself an email, then gives himself permission to go back to sleep or leisure pursuits.

Technical Services & Circulation Assistant Linda Patient and Collections & Instructions Librarian Matthew Raymond shared their observations on focus, based on their own digital use and observing students. It's not all positive. Patient notes how easy it is to get "dragged into some question on Quora" where misinformation abounds. Raymond feels that social media, unlike other media (film, books) which can be shared and debated,

is "all about you," leading to a narcissistic outlook or unhealthy comparisons to others. Kiara "Kiki" Logan, Administrative Assistant I in the Learning Success Center, sums it up with the 2024 Oxford Word of the Year referring to the unhealthy online mix of toxicity, clickbait, and time wasting: "brain rot."

Raymond encourages students to "put the phone away; watch a foreign movie." While he doesn't force books on library patrons, he challenges them to "experience something that's unique to you, unrelated to an algorithm." Logan urges students toward real-life interactions with another person or with nature: "Go plant something and see if you can make it grow."

To summarize, for better quality of life and output as an MWCC student, switch up your activities and switch off your notifications (except from your advisor).

MWCC's Learning Success Center: A Free Resource Overlooked

By **Princess Yeboah**

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Mount Wachusett Community College's LaChance Library Learning Success Center is a central resource to the campus community, but can be misleading to students of being strictly a tutoring center, which is totally not the case. Located near Trio and Student Support Services on the Gardner campus, and located near Enrollment Services on the Leominster campus, It's a service that all students have full advantage of. Ranging from assistance to research papers, mathematics classes, print and digital resources, the list is endless. The Learning Success Center is not just for students who are struggling in classes, it is an invitation to the whole MWCC community to have special access to resources to better

equip students for success inside and outside of the classroom.

The Learning Success Center offers free, one-on-one help for students. Unlike the traditional tutoring that students may come to believe, the mission statement on the Learning Center's website states "we envision a physical and digital space, where you, the student, are empowered to become an agent in your own learning". A student can get acquainted with such help by dropping in the library or making an appointment online through the LaChance library itself which is better preferred. Then, the student can select a time as well as the specific learning concern they have in either English, science or math topics etc.,

All students learn differently, and as an added benefit there is a breakdown to better

understanding the students needs by classifying them as either a kinesthetic, auditory, visual & reading learner. The certified learning instructors not only give help to students during their visit, but afterwards also send a follow up email of what was discussed and the next steps in the learning process. Students are never alone throughout this process, as there are many students who have the same learning concerns. The Learning Success Center is multi-faceted in that it doesn't only address learning concerns, but also gives opportunities to meet new people with the study rooms that the library provides, students can collaborate with others in the same areas of learning to make homework tasks seem less overwhelming.

Another aspect of this

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"LSC Resources" >>>



The Learning Success Center is located in the LaChance Library.

Photo by Princess Yeboah



ICE Protocols and Rights

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“There has definitely been an uptick in students coming in and out and this semester has been the biggest influx of students coming in just to talk about this situation. A lot of people are scared right now.”

When asked what the school is doing to guide our students through this situation, Stephanie Williams, the Chief Diversity Executive at Mount Wachusett Community College shared that she is going to be working with the marketing department “to add a link to the website so that folks can have resources, access 24/7 to this information.” She continues,

“This is not legal advice...it is high level guidance, written in clear language, around subject matter and materials law-related in terms of immigration and ICE.” Some of the links will be

all impacted,” Williams explains, “because this is our community.”

In an updated memo released on February 11th from Williams and Vander Hooven, students are reminded that “As a public

all. MWCC remains steadfast in our commitment to fostering an environment not only in support of, but truly built on diversity and inclusion.” It goes on to note that “The College will continue to support and advocate for policies that protect undocumented students...(and) enhance access to higher education for refugee and displaced students.” The document also has information regarding rights attached to it.

Kevin Bisson, a student currently working on his general education with a family member from Puerto Rico, expressed concerns about how Spanish speakers might be unfairly singled out, and worried about “Spanish speaking being a

means for ICE officers to detain anyone, including Puerto Ricans.”

A business student who wishes to be anonymous said that “All of the immigration stuff is very sensitive,” and it’s hard to “remain in a country that sometimes feels like they don’t want you” even though she is an American citizen. She proudly explains her commitment to the country and how proud she was to be able to vote. She speaks of the process to become an American citizen. Her advice to undocumented immigrants is sound advice for all of us... “Stay positive, look out for yourself and your family, and do the right thing.”

“It’s really scary out there.”

-MWCC student

for Know Your Rights Trainings through MIRA as well as links to printable information around immigration and rights that can be photocopied and shared. “We are

institution of higher education, Mount Wachusett Community College strives to provide a ‘safe’, secure and welcoming teaching and learning environment for

**Have your own opinions on current events, hot-button issues, or events on campus?
Write an opinion piece and send it to mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu**

It may just end up in our next issue!

LSC Resources

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multifaceted center is that it assists students with research. Students can again set up an appointment as well as conveniently walking in, where a research librarian can assist the student for research in specific areas and topics as needed.

Student Sabrina Alonso, Human Services Major, recounts the time she first “stepped foot” in the Learning Success Center in Fall of 2023. “The Learning Success Center has had a really positive impact in my life”, Alonso says. “I was not confident in my writing but that all changed

when I decided to step foot in the center in the Fall of 2023.” Alonso has made it a priority to continuously seek assistance at the Center, and praises the staff for being “kind, patient, and ready to help in a way that works with my learning style”.

Benjamin Heffner, a dual enrollment student, gives the Center credit for giving him “better understanding of the material than when you come in”. “I remember during my first semester at the Mount in Fall of 2023, I didn’t like the idea of tutoring,” Heffner recalls. He then goes on to say he saw a

group of students who were in the same dual enrollment program, and getting help with the same math course he was also taking.

“I decided to join them, and that’s when I met Marc [LSC instructor] ‘The Math Sherpa’ Rouleau”. Heffner now consistently visits

the Center for support in his current calculus class.

The Learning Success Center provides an outlet for students far

auditory and reading learners, as well as many books that tackle topics students are studying. Do not miss the opportunity to take

“We envision a physical and digital space, where you, the student, are empowered to become an agent in your own learning.”

- Learning Success Center website

beyond mere tutoring. It goes as far to reach not only one aspect of learning, but provides community, adhering to kinesthetic, visual,

the next step in your learning journey with MWCC’s Learning Success Center!

GET INVOLVED!

Want to join a club or participate in a community event? Then visit InvolveMOUNT at

<https://mwcc.campuslabs.com/engage/> and get started today!



“Where There is Hope, There’s Life”

By *Wayne Jurgeleit*
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Anne Frank said, “It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again”. Given the turbulent and tense political atmosphere, and the uncertainty we are facing as a Community College, MWCC weighs in on the question “Can you tell me something that happened here at the Mount that has given you hope for the future?”

Isabelle Ozomaka, a 16-year-old dual enrollment student in her second semester, said, “My advisor reminded me, when I was unsure about my future, that we have time to figure out what we want to do.”

Justina Johnson, a 2024 MWCC graduate in Business Administration and now Task Manager/Peer Mentor extraordinaire at the Brewer Center responded, “[Working] the InvolveMount Fair. It was nice to see students wanting to get involved.”

Director of Student Life, and well-known cool event planner around here, Kathy Matson, wrapping up the Survey Game Show, answered, “Seeing people that didn’t really know each other connect. It was fun seeing that.”

Elissa Brown, from Stow and currently undeclared major-wise, was grateful for all the help offered at MWCC. “There are tons of student resources available here. Food for Thought, the Career Center, the tutors at the library have been fantastic.”

Gary Brayboy, a Graphic Arts student and Peer Mentor added, “I like the fact that they have opportunities for leadership positions and other opportunities to give back to the Mount community.”

Cadyn Glynn, a young Interdisciplinary Studies student from Devens recalled, “I had a philosophy class which made me feel that we don’t really need to know everything. And that’s OK. We don’t always have answers.”

Ixchel Thibault-Munoz, President of the ALANA Club, dual enrollment student and generational activist, expressed admiration for her kind of famous parents. “It’s inspiring to see my parents trying, in spite of everything seeming to go in the other direction. [They] still work hard for things that matter.”

Art Wing Studio Assistant and MWCC alum Kevin Oxford was grateful. “The art community is like a small, happy family. And Creativity makes a more positive world”.

Casey Thompson, another dual enrollment student from Leominster, expressed a cosmic awestruck-ness when, because he had been studying *Desirata*, could literally quote, “You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees or the stars, you have a right to be here.” Wow.

One thing that all these expressions of inspiration and hope, from more commonplace to indeed profound, is that they were contagious. Contemplating Hope at all makes it easy to see that it is always available. As Elie Wiesel put it, “Hope is a gift only we can give one another.” In all things it is better to hope than to despair.



We asked you to share the love and submit your notes of affection (PALENTINES) for those around you.

These are the results:

To: Jordan Chila

From: Benjamin Heffner

"Thank you for being an awesome Editor-in-Chief!! I always enjoy looking forward to our weekly meetings :)"

To: Chrystal Voorhees

From: Jackie

"Love ya!!"

To: Jessica Kuskey

From: Ashley Plunkett

"Thank you for always caring about your students, and being one of THE most positive people I've met on campus!"

To: Princess Yeboah

From: Jordan Chila

"Thank you for being a great help to the Observer and a great friend to me!"

To: Bonnie Wicklund

From: Holly Palmer

Thank you for making my first semester in college a wonderful learning experience with your class. I use stats more often now because of you!

To: Jessica Kuskey

From: Wendy Joubert

Thank you for your guidance, encouragement, and kindness.

To: Katie Fuller

From: Jordan Chila

Thank you for being such a great mentor. I have learned so much from you and I am happy to have known you. You have made returning to college an experience that's enjoyable and I am grateful for the confidence you have in me to run the student newspaper.

To: Kara Roche

From: Eliora W-D.

Thank you for making MWCC so welcoming. I appreciate the energy and excitement you bring to lectures, meetings, the hallway, anywhere really! You make the world a better place.

To: Kimberly Kayser

From: Sabrina Alonso

Thank you for being such a great advisor and always being a huge support!! I am truly very thankful to have you as my advisor!



Laptop Buying Guide for College Students

By Kent Yang

STAFF WRITER

School is officially back in session as the spring semester begins. Whether you are a freshman entering Mount Wachusett Community College for the first time or a returning student, having the right laptop for your classes can make all the difference. However, with so many options available, choosing the right one can feel overwhelming. This guide will help you understand key laptop components, evaluate your needs, and make an informed purchasing decision.

NOTE: This is Part One of this Laptop Buying Guide. The remaining parts will be distributed throughout the following editions of the Observer, and the full article can be viewed here: <https://www.mountobserver.com/2025/02/laptop-buying-guide-for-college-students/>

Understanding Laptop Components

Before selecting a laptop, it is essential to understand its main components and how they impact performance.

1. Central Processing Unit (CPU) – Often referred to as the brain of the laptop, the CPU processes data, performs calculations, and executes tasks. A more powerful CPU ensures faster performance, especially for multitasking and demanding applications.

2. Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) – The GPU is responsible for rendering images, videos, and handling graphics-intensive tasks like gaming, video editing, and 3D modeling. Common types of GPUs you'll see on Laptops are:

- o Integrated Graphics (iGPU), which is built into the CPU.

- o Dedicated Graphics Card or GPU.

- Out of the two, dedicated Graphics are often better, better performance for high-end tasks. If you require a laptop for gaming, 3D modeling, or video editing, a dedicated GPU is highly recommended.

3. Random Access Memory (RAM) – RAM is where temporary data is stored for quick access. The amount of RAM in a laptop affects its ability to run multiple programs simultaneously. For analogy purposes, think of a room with balloons in it. If the room equates to your RAM and the balloons to data. The larger the RAM, the

more balloons can fit inside the room.

- o 4GB RAM: Suitable for basic tasks such as web browsing, word processing, and light spreadsheet work.

- o 8GB RAM: Ideal for multitasking, complex formulas in Excel, entry-level photo editing, and light gaming.

- o 16GB+ RAM: Best for gamers, content creators, and professionals who run multiple demanding applications at once.

4. Storage – Storage determines how much data your laptop can hold. Laptops typically come with either a Solid State Drive (SSD) or a Hard Disk Drive (HDD). SSDs are significantly faster and more reliable than traditional HDDs. Most modern laptops come with SSD storage, measured in gigabytes (GB) or terabytes (TB). Keep in mind 1024GB equals 1TB, so for example, if you had to make the decision between 512GB vs 1TB. Go for the 1TB of storage, which is about twice.

5. Display – The quality of a laptop's display affects its usability. Lower-end laptops typically feature Twisted Nematic (TN) or basic In-Plane Switching (IPS) panels with a standard 1920x1080 (1080P) resolution and a 60Hz refresh rate. This is sufficient for general use. However, photographers and videographers should look for an IPS panel with at least 300 nits of brightness and a color gamut covering 72% NTSC or 100% sRGB for



Photo by Andras Vas from Unsplash

accurate color representation. Gamers should prioritize OLED or Mini LED panels with a refresh rate of at least 144Hz and a resolution of 2560x1440 for a smoother experience.

6. Chassis – The chassis, or body of the laptop, is made from different materials, including plastic and metal. Metal chassis options, such as magnesium-aluminum or plasma-ceramic aluminum, provide durability but tend to be heavier. Plastic chassis are lighter but may not be as durable in the long run. If you think of how a laptop is constantly in a cold and hot state, cold when it's off, hot when it's on. When plastic is heated, it expands, when it's cold, it contracts. Repeated expansion and contraction can

cause the material to degrade much faster than more durable materials such as metal. Laptop chassis or bodies with plastic are generally lighter, more affordable, but they're worse at heat dissipation. Laptops with metal chassis are not only more durable, but they feel more premium, and dissipate heat more effectively which also means they can get hot to the touch, however in the long run, they will last significantly longer.

7. Cooling System – A laptop's cooling system is crucial for maintaining performance, particularly for high-end gaming or professional use. Most cooling systems use copper heatsinks and heat pipes to dissipate heat. High-performance laptops may feature liquid metal thermal compounds for better heat transfer, ensuring that the CPU and GPU remain cool under load. Consumers don't usually think about this part of a laptop unless they're a PC Enthusiast or Gamer.

8. Battery – Battery life depends on the type of battery used. Most laptops use lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries, which offer a balance of longevity and reliability. Slim and ultra-thin laptops often use lithium-polymer (Li-Po) batteries due to their flexibility in design. Understanding battery specifications can help you choose a laptop that meets your portability needs. A large capacity battery does not always mean it'll last longer than the competition; it depends on how the manufacturer implements it.

9. Operating Systems - The operating system (OS)

manages hardware and provides a user interface. Choosing the right OS depends on software needs, budget, and personal preference.

- o Windows: Highly versatile, supports a vast range of software, and is widely used in business, education, and gaming.

- o macOS: Offers a smooth experience, strong security, and is ideal for creatives using software like Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro, though it has limited compatibility with some applications and is expensive.

- o Linux: Open-source, highly customizable, and favored by developers and cybersecurity professionals, but lacks support for mainstream software like Adobe and Microsoft Office.

- o ChromeOS: Designed for web-based applications, affordable, lightweight, but has major limitations with software and offline functionality.

10. Webcam - A webcam is essential for online classes and video conferencing. Most budget laptops have 720p webcams, which can appear grainy, while higher-end models offer 1080p webcams with better clarity. Some premium laptops include IR webcams for facial recognition (Windows Hello). If video quality is a priority, consider a 1080p webcam or invest in an external webcam for improved performance.



Creative Writing

Mother

A poem by Sophie Harrold

quietly,
with no one noticing,
She moves the branches aside.

humbly,
when no one else can see,
She cares for everyone.

sweetly,
while everyone else is having fun,
She stays behind.

in Her life,
people hear Her without listening,
they see Her without looking,
but She continues to move the branches aside.

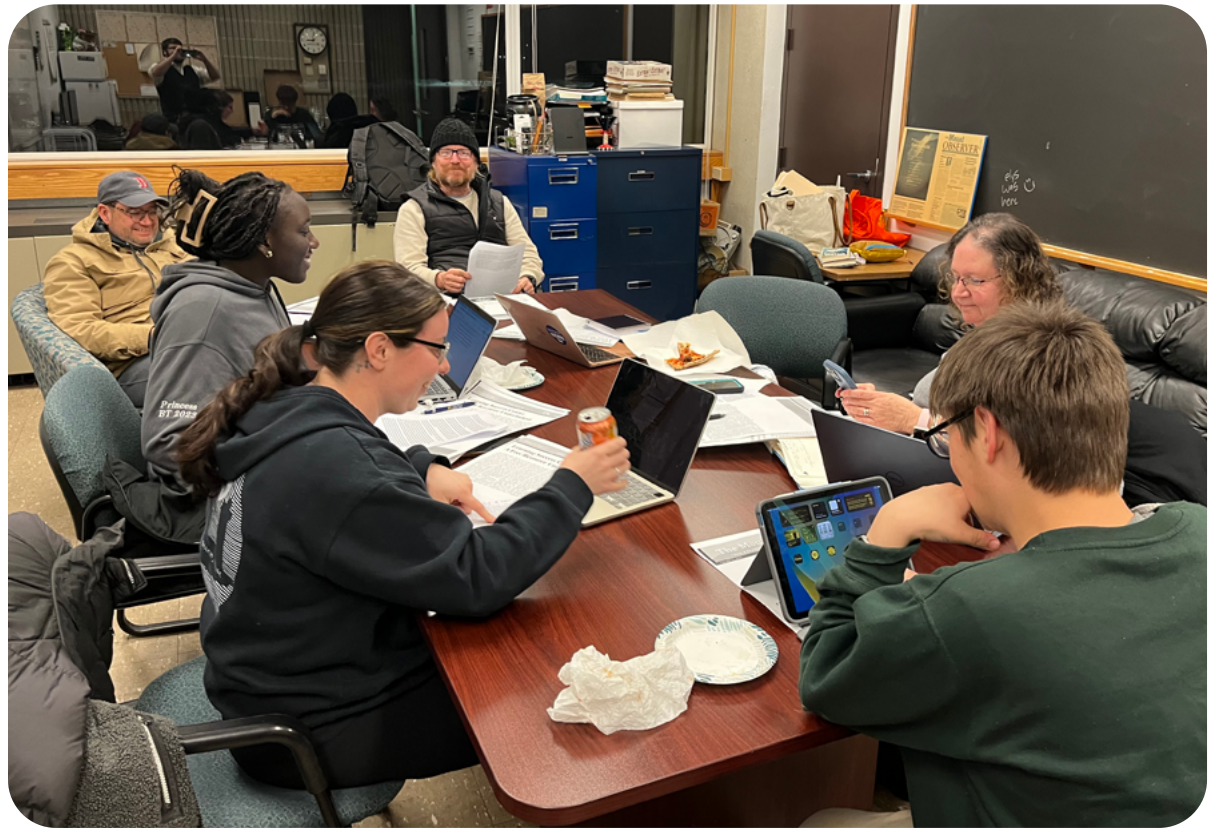
without Her,
they would falter,
with Her,
they will thrive.

but one question remains,
for Her,
who will move the branches aside?

Join the *Mount Observer* crew and get your writing, photography, artwork, or reviews out into the world! Or maybe take on a behind-the-scenes role and help run the *Observer's* website or social media. Whatever your interests, you can find a place on our team!

BACK IN THE OFFICE!

The grand return of on-campus meet-ups for the *Mount Observer* team! Clockwise from right: Desiree Leader (Staff Writer), Ben Heffner (Staff Writer), Jordan Chila (Editor-in-Chief), Princess Yeboah (Assistant Editor), Régulo Moreno (Assistant Editor), Wayne Jurgeleit (Assistant Editor); Photo by Tom Hill Jr.



CALLING ALL ARTISTS

The *Mount Observer's* mascot, Carl the Catamount, will be receiving a bit of a makeover, and we figured; why should we have all the fun?

So if you have a creative itch that needs scratching, send in your own fan art of Carl for publication in this semester's remaining issues of the *Observer*.

We look forward to seeing your interpretations of our cuddly cub reporter!

Happy Drawing!

- *The Mount Observer* team



WHAT'S COOKIN' AT MWCC

Valentines Pizza

Recipe from lifestyleofafoodie.com

Ingredients

- 1 ball of pizza dough
- 1/3 cup of pizza sauce
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- Pepperoni
- Mozzarella and parmesan cheese
- Basil



Photo: lifestyleofafoodie.com

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 450F and allow your pizza stone to warm up in the oven while you shape your pizza. If you don't have your pizza stone no worries, line a baking sheet with parchment and set aside.
2. On a well-floured parchment paper spread your pizza dough into a heart shape. If using a pizza stone build your pizza now, no need to transfer it to a baking sheet. Use a pizza paddle to place it in the oven or a large cutting block.
3. Gently transfer it to a baking sheet or large cookie sheet and fix up the heart shape if needed. Spread the tomato sauce on the dough then add the cheese then the heart-shaped pepperoni and bake in the preheated oven for 10-15 minutes. Check for doneness at around 10 minutes.
4. Top the pizza with the chopped-up basil, slice, and enjoy!

NOTES:

Use a small cookie cutter to make the perfect heart pepperoni. If you don't have a cookie cutter you can gently fold your pepperoni in half and cut it in a heart shape using scissors.

See Your Recipe Here!

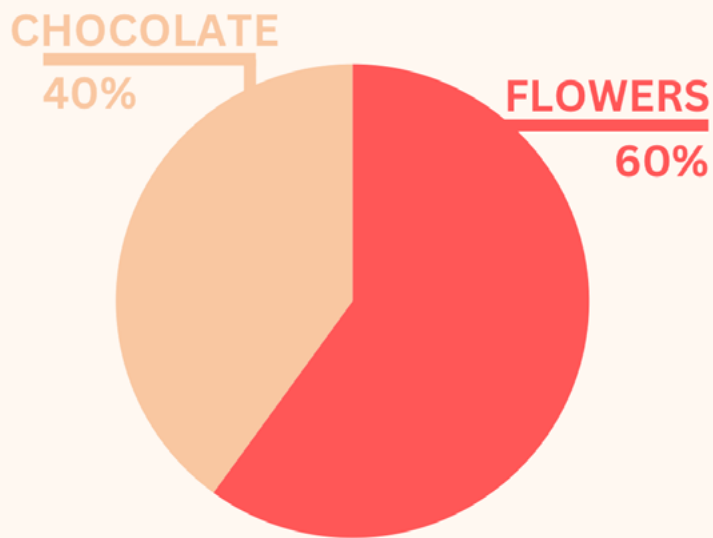
Send your favorite cooking combos to us at mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu



The Mount Observer Polls presents

Your Thoughts

Would you prefer chocolate or flowers on Valentine's Day?



What are your goals for the Spring semester?



Submit your creative work to *A Certain Slant*

MWCC's Student Literary Arts Journal

Poems, Stories, Essays, Plays, Scripts, Art, Photos –
All original work welcome!

Deadline is March 7, 2025

Email your work as a Word attachment to m_valois@mwcc.mass.edu
with the subject line "submission"

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