

The BCC Writing Centers Off to New Beginning

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Two people socialize at a table in B110 at the Fall River campus. They both appear at ease, conversing with one another as if partaking in their daily chatter.

To the left, two others sit side-by-side at a computer. One is laughing at something the other person said. The comfort level between these peers is the type that can be observed in friends. In reality, however, this is

See PAGE 6

BCC Taunton Center Builds Student Rapport in New Building

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See PAGE 4



The front door of the BCC Taunton Center, located at 61 Summer St. (Photo by Brian Casey)



The Director of the BCC Writing Centers Dr. Genie Gaiimo. (Photo by Brian Casey)

Holiday Season Customer Etiquette 101

BY: ANGELA HILSMAN
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Inflatable Christmas ornaments three-times my size hang from the mall ceiling starting November 1st. Pop remixes of holiday favorites turn on repeat for the two months leading up to Santa's all-nighter. Goodies bags and holiday sales tempt seasonal shoppers, while the girl behind the

counter is blinded by full-time bright lights and glitter. She'll help you survive the mall madness, and it'd be nice if you returned the favor.

Having worked retail myself during the holidays, I can say nothing kills the holiday spirit faster than crazed

See PAGE 8

The Observer

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Letters to the Editor

Common Ground for All Views on Ferguson

BY: NICK AREIAS
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Last August, a police officer shot and killed an 18 year-old in Ferguson, Missouri. This event not only outraged the local community, who took to the streets in protest, but sparked a very controversial and very complex conversation.

This incident touches upon race, age, police training, and many other issues for people, but if we take the time to think about the situation without prejudice, we reach a point where all perspectives find common ground.

If we take away the context of the situation and ask, "Is it acceptable that an 18-year-old has been killed," most people would answer no. It's unacceptable to kill other humans, and Michael Brown was only 18. That's a bit young considering the normal life expectancy is 78 years.

Ask, "Should we do what we can to prevent 18 year-old boys from being killed?" Most agree, yes. Our society, comparable to a sick patient, must seek a remedy for its illness. We should do what we can to fix this.

People are going to get angry. I would be upset too if a friend was shot and killed, no matter what the circumstances. At the same time, people are going to defend our servicemen, like Police Officer Darren Wilson. Ultimately, it doesn't matter if Wilson is innocent or guilty. Whether he is convicted or not, Brown is dead.

If we can agree that 18-year-olds shouldn't be killed, then we should spend less time arguing and more time thinking of a solution to the problem. One proposal would require police officers to wear a body camera to help document incidents like this and provide concrete evidence.

Many debates sprung from this tragedy, and many people are upset. However, we won't make progress by stubbornly defending the differences in our opinions. Death of a youth, police brutality, riots and misdemeanors, lack of accountability, and a lack of conversation--these are complex problems.

The focus should be, not on an individual level (who did what wrong and who is to blame), but on the solution, and how we as a society can do better.

The Observer welcomes Letters to the Editor.

Please email as an attachment to
observer@bristolcc.edu.
 Include your name and phone number.

The Giving Tree Gives

BY: TAMRA FIORI
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For the past seven years, the Student Senate has run the Giving Tree, a donation program for the holiday season. This year, they upped the program by providing the Attleboro and New Bedford campuses with their own tree.

The Giving Tree helps provide gifts for financially-struggling BCC students with children. The student fills out an application indicating their child's needs and wants, an anonymous ornament tag is created, and community members take a tag off the tree and purchase the gift encrypted on it.

"Previously we hosted the actual Giving Tree only at the Fall River campus, but applications were distributed at all campuses, to all students, and the Senate delivered the presents to each campus," said Sara DeMoura, a chair member for the program.

The Giving Tree program does not reveal neither the donor's nor the applicant's identity. The donor brings in a wrapped gift and the applicant simply picks it up between December 15th and 22nd from the appropriate campus.

"Every year we serve about 150 people and it looks like this year will be about the same," said DeMoura.

Twenty-five tags will hang from both the Attleboro and New Bedford

trees, while Fall River will hang 80 tags.

The Student Senate ensures that each applicant receives a gift for their child.

The Senate raises money to purchase gifts for any remaining tags, in the event that there are not enough donors, but this has rarely been a problem in the past.

"Don't forget, if we are serving 150 students, there are also 150 staff and faculty members who are participating in the purchase of these gifts. This activity reaches many staff and students and is a favorite of the Student Senate," said DeMoura.

Amy Blanchette, who co-chairs the program with DeMoura, helps to decorate the tree with Student Senate members.

"It's important to give back," Blanchette stated as the reason she enjoys the program.

Both DeMoura and Blanchette send their thanks to participants.



Student Senate Members Amy Blanchette, Sara DeMoura, Beth Dube, Christina Lam, Isaiah Miller. (Photo by Brian Casey)

A Student's Special Thanks to the Office of Disability Services



The ODS team (from left to right): Cindy Grew, Sue Boissoneault, Lindsey Carrita, Cindy Poore-Pariseau, Sasha Sullivan, Judith Lowe, Holly Madonna, Pat Weisberger, Carol Flock. (Photo by Brian Casey)

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I have been a student at Bristol Community College since Fall 2013. I would like to tell you about a great resource that BCC offers. It is the Office of Disability Services (ODS), located in L109. And yes, I am a client of theirs.

I decided to get my college degree in the summer of 2013. It had been thirty-five years since I had graduated high school.

I was scared because I knew that it would be difficult. I read about ODS on BCC's website and made an appointment to go see them the next day.

The secretary welcomed me when I first walked in. A councilor discussed the requirement for service with me, which is only documentation to prove your disability.

From there we made a plan to acquire the services I needed. Every semester, I visit for a check-in, and to update any services if necessary.

Many services are offered through ODS, from notetakers to extended time on quizzes. ODS also offers reduced-distraction testing areas, recordings of lectures, American Sign Language interpreters, textbooks in alternative format, and others.

I personally want to thank the overburdened, understaffed ODS

for all the help they have provided me. The employees are always willing to go the extra mile. I currently hold a 3.8 GPA because of their help and hard work.

Here are some other fun facts about the ODS, based on their 2013-2014 annual report:

Of the total 1,189 Students with Disabilities (SWD) registered for Academic Year (AY) 2013-2014, 857 actively worked with a Learning Specialist in the ODS.

Eighty percent of the 500 students working with a Learning Specialist had a cumulative GPA of 2.0. Of those 500, 45% had a GPA of 3.0 or greater.

In Fall 2013, there was a total of 1,266 reported disabilities.

The Assistive Technology (AT) Lab provides access to a wide variety of technologies and services to qualified disabled students.

The AT Lab staff members make recommendations for appropriate equipment and offer training and support. During AY14, 114 students took advantage of AT Lab services.

Please contact me or ODS (x2955) for more information, or visit <http://bristolcc.smartcatalogiq.com/2013-2014/Catalog/Student-Services/Services-for-students-with-disabilities>.

Taunton Center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

This past August, the former Taunton Catholic Middle School at 61 Summer St. reopened as Bristol Community College's Taunton Center, with Gloria Saddler as Director at the helm.

Shawn Hampe, a general studies/Mass transfer major who wants to work with animals, said his experience so far at the BCC Taunton Center has been excellent.

Hampe likes how open the center is to the students. "The professors are open-minded and flexible to the students' needs," he said.

General studies/health science student Jamie Gomes said she loves how "very interactive" the center is.

Jamie spoke of her experience starting a food drive for Thanksgiving with another student.

"The drive was very successful.

The donations went to local food pantries, which was much needed," she said. Although Jamie is leaving BCC to join the Marines in March, Saddler said she will be missed.

The Taunton BCC Center offers a plethora of courses, including developmental courses in English and Math.

The Center also offers Taunton public school/adult basic education and a work development program. Local businesses also offer workshops at the campus.

Saddler expressed her desire to introduce Biology 111 to the Taunton campus, saying it "is the foundation gateway to many of our health science programs." She'd also appreciate Chemistry 090 classes in town.

For more information, call 508.678.2811, ext. 3767, or email Taunton@bristolcc.edu.

Jamie Gomes representing the Food Drive. (Photo by Brian Casey)



Students Shawn Hampe and Jamie Gomes. (Photo by Brian Casey)



Ribbon Cutting for Taunton Center (left to right): Mayor of Taunton Tom Hoye, Senator Marc Pacheco, BCC President Jack Spraga, State Representative Patricia A. Haddad, State Representative Keiko M. Orrall. (Photo courtesy of BCC Taunton Center)



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The BCC Writing Centers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

not a social space, but one in which tutoring sessions proceed.

The BCC Writing Centers present an atmosphere where an outsider cannot tell the tutor from the tutee. There is no authoritative figure mandating their student. Instead, writers visit to have a conversation about their writing.

"You can expect to be welcomed, to feel safe and to never to be judged, only helped. It's a place that writers can go to for help at any stage in their writing process, from pre-writing and outlining to revising a final draft," said Dr. Genie Giaimo, the new director of the Writing Centers at BCC.

The Writing Centers (in Attleboro, Fall River, New Bedford and Taunton) are heading in a new direction with Giaimo as the new director.

Giaimo brings with her a dedication and passion for the Writing Center as well as a wealth of knowledge from her prior experience.

Giaimo recently received her Ph.D. in English at Northeastern University where she says she "was tapped to help run and improve the Northeastern Writing Center" during her studies.

Giaimo is also a professor at BCC. She taught ENG 262: Tutoring in a Writing Center Practicum during the fall semester.

According to her students, Giaimo isn't your standard type of English teacher. Her expectations of writing aren't as structured as many students are used to, which allows them more freedom to write as they'd like.

She gets her students to think outside of the box and to write from different perspectives as well as for different audiences.

Students in Giaimo's class handed out hundreds of surveys to students on all BCC campuses to get feedback on the Writing Center. In doing so, students learned that the Writing Centers are a resource that are underutilized—mostly because writers weren't aware of their existences, but also because of common misconceptions that surround participating in a tutoring session.

Below are five of the Writing Center's most common misconceptions demystified.

1) The Writing Center is only for students. The Writing Center is not

just for students. It is open to everyone including staff and faculty members.

2.) The Writing Center is only for inexperienced or remedial writers. This is false. The Writing Center welcomes writers of all different levels—from beginners to advanced writers. The most experienced writers can still benefit from a session at the Writing Centers.

Lillie Wilson, a tutor there, said, "Writers with some experience may be the ones who benefit most from a session at the Center. Where else can you find a lengthy one-on-one session with a professional who can show you how to polish your prose? A writing tutor can help even a comfortable writer see his or her style through fresh eyes," she said.

3.) The Writing Center will edit your paper. Contrary to popular belief, the Writing Center is not an editorial service, but rather a place where a tutor can work with an individual and teach them techniques that will help them to become a better writer.

4.) Writers can drop off their paper at the Writing Center for review. This is false. A tutor will not work on a paper without the writer present, as it is a joint and collaborative effort that requires participation from the "owner" of the paper: the writer!

5.) The Writing Center can only be used for papers in an English course. This is false. Writers can bring in a paper about any subject matter to the Writing Center. It does not have to be for an English class, or any class at all for that matter: resumes, college personal statements, and honors projects are just some of the texts that the Writing Center assists with.

"We help students with writing assignments such as research papers, but we also help students with their professional documents, such as resumes and cover letters and their creative writing, such as a memoir or a short story," added Giaimo.

BCC's Writing Centers employ tutors from a diverse background, and they range from peers to professors.

Some have years of tutoring or teaching experience, while others may be new to it. They all help anyone who walks in to "become better writers," said tutor, Joan Cormier. "That is what it is all about."

Wilson said the Center's tutors "offer expertise in a number of fields, not just English or Communications. With a little advance inquiry, you're sure to locate a tutor who can give you special help in your area of need."

Martha Ucci, a tutor, said she loves "helping students discover the value in writing clear and direct prose." She added, "One-on-one connection with student writers [is] very gratifying."

Cormier agreed, "working with students" is her favorite part of the job.

Sue Forman, tutor, said she enjoys the "change of pace from classroom teaching of specific content. Students come in with various writing assignments across the curriculum, so it can be interesting to read someone's science research since I'm an English teacher."

Similar to Forman, tutor Alan Pearlmuter also enjoys working there because of "the wide diversity of needs that come [his] way."

Linda Howayek, a staff member at the Fall River Writing Center since 1999, discussed the long-term benefits of the Center, saying they extend beyond college and into the professional sphere.

"Because college writing has ac-

countability, grades are closely scrutinized. There is added pressure regarding performance and quality. Visiting the Writing Center can alleviate fear of failure by developing an understanding of the writing process. It can build confidence by breaking down writing assignments into smaller steps and safeguard student success by merely offering acceptance and support," Howayek said.

Students visiting one of the Writing Centers find they get individual attention and guidance that is sometimes lacking in a classroom setting. Additionally, they learn skills that improve their writing.

Giaimo welcomes both newbie and returning students. "Come on! We offer free and friendly advice on writing. Also, everyone can benefit from a session at the WC—writers are not born, they are made, and we are here to help you on your life-long journey as learners and as writers."

For more information about one of the Writing Centers, including hours, locations, and contact information, please visit <http://www.bristolcc.edu/students/writingcenter/>

Appointments can be made over the phone (ext. 2544 in Fall River) or in person at B110 in Fall River.

Tutor Ralph Moniz works with student Shelby Graham at the Fall River Writing Center. (Photo by Tamra Fiori)



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Customer Etiquette 101

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

shoppers strutting their pre-Christmas entitlement because “they’re always right.”

I talked to a dozen retail workers, both sales associates and managers, to find out what their biggest peeves are. Here’s the top 10 things that retail workers can’t say, but if you keep them in mind, it’ll be happy holidays for both parties.

10. We don’t live here. These girls actually get in trouble for going over payroll hours, so before you rush in at five minutes ‘til close thinking you’re going to quickly and decisively buy a gift for your sister’s boyfriend’s half-cousin from a removed aunt of a co-worker, reevaluate your plan. Start early. Be organized. And remember that they have families. They want to get home to too.

9. We know you’re stealing. Retail workers are not only trained to spot theft, but they’ve seen it all and have heard every excuse. Don’t think you’re pulling one over; they only let you go if it’s store policy. Although they get great pleasure out of persecuting difficult people, most places only aim for merchandise retrieval. If they call you out on stealing, just hand it over and leave.

8. I’m not your babysitter. While your children run amuck screaming and playing and breaking shit, either in your presence or not, do not expect employees to act as entertainment, ensure kid safety, or be happy with your failed parenting.

7. I’m not your maid either. Yes, there are so many pretty things in a store that it can be hard to put it back exactly where you found it, but dropping it on the floor or hiding it in the shelves is not acceptable. Someone has to go around behind you to find and return all those misplaced tidbits. Don’t touch unless you 1) have the money to pay for it and 2) you’re seriously thinking about buying it. If you’ve picked up an item of unknown origin, give it to someone who works there. They’d prefer it.

If you break something, apologize and let them know. I once watched a girl try to fit a mask on, and instead of accepting defeat, she forced it over her head, broke the elastic band, and made eye contact with me as she hung it back on the hook. Retail workers

cannot make you pay for it, nor is it a (direct) loss to their wallets. However, they do have to, again, find and pull those tidbits that need superglue.

6. Store trash cans and bathrooms are for employee use only. Yes, they have a trash can, but they’re going to have to clean up your leaking soda container if you insist on using it. Do not be rude and leave your trash hidden all over the store. There is public can two steps out the door in the middle of the hallway. As for bathrooms, if you can’t see them, it’s because they’re not available for your use.

5. We have no control over stock, prices, or policy. They know that same item was half the price last week. They know they’re out of that very popular Elsa doll. They know that you probably had the receipt at one point. But throwing a hissy fit when things don’t go your way just makes you look foolish. They get paid to do what they’re told and work with what they have. If you don’t like it, call Corporate.

4. We’re only nice because we’re paid to be nice. They’re not being paid to hear your life story, act as your punching bag, or let you practice your pick-up lines. But they’ll smile and nod and offer cheap banter because they’re being paid to make your shopping experience pleasant. That’s it.

3. We have feelings too. When they say hello, say it back. Get off the phone while they ring out your purchase. Make eye contact. Put the money in their hand. Acknowledge that they’re working a very stressful job and doing their best to help you out. They’re people too with wish-lists and families and feelings. Don’t spoil their holiday.

2. You’re not always right. The fact that you think you are is just good business tactic. Don’t be unreasonable.

1. It’s just stuff. The holidays are supposed to center on warm spirits, generosity, and friendly gestures. Do not waste your holiday season running around like a headless chicken, spending more money than retail workers make weekly, on stuff that’s both irrelevant and will break before next Christmas. Spend your time doing something meaningful with the people that mean the most to you.

Happy Holidays. Don’t be a jerk.



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