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

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BCC Taunton Center Builds Student Rapport in New Building

By: Brian Casey
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The Director of the BCC Writing Centers Dr. Genie Giaino.
(Phot 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

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Letters to the Editor

Common Ground for All Views on Ferguson

BY: NICK AREAS nareas@briistolcc.edu

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 was 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 reveal neither the donor’s nor the recipient’s identity. We need to wear a body camera to help document incidents like this and provide concrete evidence.

Many debates spring 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 mourners, lack of accountability, and a lack of education—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.

People are going to get angry. I would be upset too if a friend of mine was shot and killed, no matter what the circumstances. At the same time, people are going to do the same thing to defend our servicemen, like Police Officer Darren Wilson. Ultimately, it doesn’t matter whether he 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.

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The Observer welcomes Letters to the Editor.

Please email as an attachment to editor@briistolcc.edu.

Include your name and phone number.

The Giving Tree Gives

BY: TASKS FORI OVS @STAFF MEMBER tfori11@briistolcc.edu

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 students and New Bedford campuse’s with their own Giving 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 taken 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 or the recipient’s identity. The donor brings in a wrapped gift and the recipient simply picks it up between December 15th and 22nd from the corresponding campus.

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

This year’s Giving Tree will hang from both the Attleboro and New Bedford campuses, while Fall River will hang 10 tags.

The Student Senate ensures that each recipient applies for 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 pining for the purchase of these gifts. This activity reaches more reaches of the local community and a large portion of the Student Senate, said DeMoura.

Any Bianchette, who chairs the program with DeMoura, helps to decorate the tree with Student Senate members.

“It’s important to give back,” Bianchette stated as the reason she enjoys the program.

Both DeMoura and Bianchette send their thanks to participants.
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.”

Students Shawn Hampe and Jamie Gomes. (Photo by Brian Casey)
The BCC Writing Centers
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not a social space, but one in which tutoring sessions proceed.

The BCC Writing Centers present an atmosphere where an outsider cannot
not tell the tutor from the tutee. There is no authoritative figure mandating
their student. Instead, writers visit to have a conversation about their writ-
ing. “You can expect to be welcomed, to feel safe and to never be judged, only helped. It’s a place that students 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 from Northeastern University
where she says she “was tapped to help run and improve the Northeast-
ern Writing Center” during her studies. Giaimo is also a professor at BCC.
She taught ENG 202: 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 dif-
ferent perspectives as well as for
different audiences.

Students in Giaimo’s class handed
in their short story, “The Winter
Rose,” for review.

This is false. Writers can bring in a pa-
er 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 per-
sonal 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 re-
sumes and cover letters and their cre-
ative writing, such as a memoir or a
short story,” said Giaimo.

BCC’s Writing Centers employ
tutors from a diverse background, and
they range from peers to professors.
Some have years of tutoring or teach-
ing 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 “of-
fers 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.”

Giaimo says “working with students” is her favorite part of the
job.

See Forman, tutor, said she enjoys
the “change of pace from classroom
teaching to one-on-one sessions.”
Students come in with various writing assign-
ments across the curriculum, so it
can be interesting to read someone’s
science research since I’m an English
teacher.”

Similarly to Forman, tutor Alan
Pearlmutr also enjoys working there
because of “the wide diversity of
needs that come [his] way.”

Linda Howayeck, a staff member
at the Fall River Writing Center since
1999, discussed the long-term ben-
efits of the Center, saying they extend
beyond college and into the profes-
sional sphere.

“Because college writing has ac-
countability, grades are closely scruti-
nized. There is added pressure regard-
ning performance and quality. Visiting the Writing Center can alleviate fear of
failure by developing an understand-
ing 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,” Ho-
wayeck said.

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

Giaimo welcomes both newbie
and returning students. “Come on in!
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 jour-
ney 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 B120 in Fall River.

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Customer Etiquette 101
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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.

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.