MAINE CENTRAL INSTITUTE

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Winter at Maine Central Institute



Greetings from MCI Residential Life!

As we enter the second half of this fast moving school year here at MCI, I can't help but look back and be amazed by all that we have done thus far and how amazing our students have been.

For a school of just over 300 students, with 60 of them being our residential students, it is incredible to be able to see all their amazing accomplishments, both inside and outside of the classroom. In the classroom I see time and time again our residential students receiving recognition in all subjects from a multitude of teachers. Outside of the classroom I see them performing so well in our Visual Performing Arts department, on the athletic fields and taking advantage of all the different clubs and activities that we have to offer. Many of them are trying something new for the first time. I sometimes wonder how they balance it all, but they do so beautifully.

I know this newsletter is only a small picture of all that is going on here at MCI, but hopefully you get a sense of how special MCI is, as well as how special our students are.

All the best!
John Dean
Dean of Student Life

Thanksgiving/Holiday Parade

by Koyuki Watamura ’27 - Japan



Thanksgiving season at MCI succeeded and brought a lot of fantastic memories for us. We were holding a feast with not only those here at MCI, but also with families from the local community. This lets us feel our connections with neighbors around the campus as one community belonging here together.

I was sincerely grateful to have such a good opportunity to get to know how important Thanksgiving is in the U.S., since I hadn’t experienced it before I came here as an international student. All of us had a wonderful and meaningful time together with nice traditional meals at the cafeteria!

Two days after Thanksgiving Day, we started off preparing for the best season of the year -Christmas! Being a part of the local holiday parade with other people who also looked forward to this grand event was amazing. There were many kinds of local companies and organizations that made floats and participated in it which made its atmosphere special even more. MCI students passed out a bunch of candy canes with papers wrapped around each one that said “Merry Christmas” in the different languages represented here at MCI, which is rich in diversity.

We had a very wonderful time with other dorm student friends and our dorm parent, and it has been an absolute highlight of my first year to be here! Overall, this period of time has been a most exciting time and created chances to get to know other people more.

Moreover, during this break, we had the first snow of this winter! It was filled with truly memorable experiences through this Thanksgiving week. I cannot wait to see what else this year is going to bring!

Midterms



by Hyewon No ’25 - South Korea

Our school, Maine Central Institute, holds midterm and final tests at the end of each term. I studied at school in Korea before I came to the U.S. Similarly tests came in the middle and at the end of a term as well. Taking tests here felt like a repeat of what I had done before. I was not too nervous about the tests at first seeing how I grew accustomed to the process back in Korea.

At the start school subjects seemed light and I took tests without worry. As I advanced to higher grades and tackled subjects that required extra thought, pressure returned similarly to when I studied in Korea. I learned that focused study cleared the way through pressure. My quarter scores and test scores reflected my hard work and I enjoyed my school life in a way that kept me safe and calm.

This year I took my last midterm in January and will face my final test in May at this school. I feel relief but I also sense mixed feelings when I think that I close an important chapter. Each term test lets me revisit the material I had learned and bring back topics I overlooked or did not grasp fully. The midterm proved to be of great help.

I look forward to what is to come after MCI, but know I will be ready and prepared thanks to all the hard work I have put in and the excellent teaching that I have received.



Final Semester

by Hyunji Lim ’25 - South Korea

With the end of the midyear exams, I now prepare for my final semester here at MCI, which I am very excited about. A couple of classes that I will be taking in my final semester here at MCI are Project Management and Introduction to Medical Concepts.

I found a interesting and useful class which is called “Project Management” with Mrs. Libby. This is about how to manage the project and how to work with others. In our daily lives, we plan something to do, and we process the plan as we do. For example, we planned to go on vacation and make the plan for it, and go on vacation. That is one example of making a project. We only had one project and started to learn the term for project management. Mrs. Libby worked hard to make our classes enjoyable while also learning about project management. I really recommend this class to others who are interested in business and engineering but I also recommend it to all of the students because it helps to work with others by learning how to work together and also doing projects together. I am so excited to do more fun projects in the class with my classmates.

Also, I found the class called “Introduction to Medical Concept” by Mrs. Palonis, which is covering medical stuff such as learning the medical terminology or how to use medical tools like measuring blood pressure. Also, we go to hospital and do 3 or 4 different job shadows which will help to decide the career better. For me, this class is going to help me a lot because I am interested in the medical field and through this class, I could learn more about the medical field. I am so excited to go to the hospital for the job shadow and also the class. I am excited for both classes in my semester. Although I entered my last semester with mixed feelings, I know that taking these classes will be a big reason why my last semester will be my best.

Dorm Olympics

by Seine Chin ’25 - United States

MCI has long been known for its traditions, like juniors writing the Manson Essay and seniors creating senior projects. This year, however, a new tradition was born: the Dorm Olympics. This exciting event brought the residential community together by dividing students into four Hogwarts-style houses to compete in a series of playful games. The houses—Red Hot Chili Peppers (red team), Blue Jays (blue team), Hornets (yellow team), and Green Goats (green team) have embraced the challenge.

Points are awarded after each game: 25 points for fourth place, 50 for third, 75 for second, and 100 for first. The ultimate goal? To get the most points by the end of the year and win an exclusive prize.

The Dorm Olympics kicked off with a flag-decorating competition, where each team showcased their creativity by designing a crest featuring their team name, mascot, and members’ names. Next up was a door-decorating contest, encouraging students to express their personality through unique door designs. From there, the games ramped up with activities like volleyball in Park’s gym and a human hula-hoop challenge.

The competitions didn’t stop at sports—students tested their knowledge with trivia on MCI history and Thanksgiving facts. Most recently, the Dorm Olympics featured a teddy bear relay race during a pajama-themed sit-down dinner. The Dorm Olympics have been a great addition to MCI’s traditions, offering students a chance to show their competitive side while also having to work together as a team.

Current Rankings (as of February 20th):

Red Hot Chili Peppers - 625
Blue Jays - 625
Green Goats - 500
Hornets - 500

BBT/The Nutcracker



by Jane Mautz ’25 - United States

Bossov Ballet Theatre’s performance of The Nutcracker this year was incredibly successful! Practically all four shows were sold out, and each one ended great. As a senior this year it was a bittersweet moment to perform one last time with the BBT family. I remember thinking my freshman year that I had so much time, but somehow every year seemed to go by faster and faster. I truly couldn’t have asked for a better Nutcracker to end on. The choreography was beautifully put together by Natalya Getman and was so vibrant on stage. One of my favorite shows from this year was on Saturday night when the entire dorm community traveled to watch The Nutcracker.

After the show, it was amazing to see everyone from the dorm community come and congratulate us for the show you just performed for them. Some of them even admitted that they weren’t looking forward to coming, however after watching the show they’re already looking forward to next year. Having a support system like that, that will come to watch and congratulate you truly makes all the blood, sweat, and tears worth it. I’m deeply looking forward to watching The Nutcracker next year as an audience member.



Weekend Trips

by Seojun Park ’26 - South Korea



This year, the 24–25 season, MCI started a new program for international students from various countries to give them special opportunities, which is called mandatory trips. We’ve been to a lot of places that allow us to feel some “american cultures”, and I will introduce two places: a University of Maine Black Bear hockey game and a Maine Celtics basketball game.

Most of us haven’t had any opportunity to watch any hockey games in our home country. So when we watched the UMaine hockey game, we were so astonished by their passion and the fanatical attitude of the audience. We all could feel how much they love and support their team and it was a really good chance to feel the real America, especially for students who have never seen a hockey game before. To make it that much more special UMaine put on a reception for us with delicious food and introducing us to all that they have to offer at UMaine.

For the Maine Celtics game, most students of Manson Hall, which is boy’s dorm, like watching NBA games together and support each different team. Therefore, we were all excited to watch a professional game in real life even though it was a G-League game. As we expected, their game was really different from watching it on TV. We could see how they move and play the game almost 20ft away from the court. After the game we spent some time at the Maine Mall to do a little shopping and to get something to eat. It was a great day spent with my friends.

Mandatory trips can bond international students together and allow them to have big positive memories in America. It is an absolutely good opportunity to make new stories in our life that we would never have if we didn’t come here.

Country’s Flag Ceremony

by Al-Amin Machira ’26 - Tanzania



My name is Al-Amin Suleiman Machira. I’m from Tanzania. I’m an international student at Maine Central Institute. During my whole 3 years at MCI I have experienced the flag ceremony, which is one of my favorite ceremonies at MCI. It’s a wholesome experience to see my peers representing their country’s flag, their faces filled with pride and joy to represent their nation.

As I walked in, I felt a rush of excitement as cheers filled the air. The energy of my classmates and teachers made the moment even more special as I approached my flag. My heart pounded with pride, knowing I was representing my country in front of the whole school. Grabbing the rope, pulling the flag, and raising it high. I felt a deep connection to my culture and where I come from. Seeing it displayed alongside so many others, reminded me how diverse and united our school is. In that moment, I wasn’t just carrying a flag, I was sharing my identity with everyone around me, and it was an experience I will never forget.

Lunar New Year



by Sara Barrera ’25 - Mexico

The Lunar New Year dinner was an experience I really enjoyed because it allowed me to get a small glimpse of traditions in other places and appreciate the diverse cultures we have here. It was fascinating to learn about the customs, decorations, and significance of different dishes, each symbolizing prosperity, good fortune, or happiness for the new year.

I also think it’s something special for my classmates who celebrate it since, even though they are away from home, they still get to experience this tradition with their friends here. It provides them with a sense of comfort and connection to their culture, even while being in a different country. Seeing everyone come together to enjoy the celebration made the event even more meaningful. It looked like a lot of fun in the videos we watched, and I really liked the food, especially the dumplings and noodles, which I learned represent wealth and longevity. It was one of my favorite parts of the evening.

I also had a great time in the lucky money activity, where we learned about the tradition of giving red envelopes filled with money as a symbol of good luck and prosperity. It was exciting to take part in a custom that has been passed down for generations, and it made the experience feel even more authentic. The entire event was a wonderful way to celebrate and appreciate Lunar New Year traditions, and I’m glad I got to be part of it.





Athletics at MCI

by David Wright '25, Panama

Hello, my name is David Wright. I'm a boarding student from Panama, and I love basketball. This year, I had the opportunity to come to MCI as both a student and an athlete.

When I first arrived, I was a bit nervous about how I would get along with people here and how I would develop my English skills. However, that wasn't a problem at all because everyone was welcoming from the start, and I made friends in no time.

The coaches pushed me to my limits—which I really liked—and motivated us before and after every game. I truly enjoyed the season I played here at MCI, and I have no regrets about my decision to come here to finish my senior year and play my last high school basketball season.

Not only did I truly enjoy playing MCI basketball, I also decided to play other sports like soccer in the fall and looking forward to the upcoming spring season where I could play baseball, track and field, or tennis. Not sure which one I will do yet, but I do know I am looking forward to it. You might come here alone, just like I did, but I can assure you that when you leave, you'll have another family and friends for life.





New England Patriots Game

by John Dean, Dean of Students

As a longtime season ticket holder to the New England Patriots, I often go to as many games as I can each season, but often find myself selling and/or gifting away the tickets to the last game of the season. The reason I do this is two fold, first I love giving the opportunity to those that have never been to a Patriots game the opportunity to go and second it's January and more often than not it's freezing.

This year the Patriots wrapped up a lackluster season with a season finale against Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills. Although many inquired about the tickets this year I decided to attend the game to give one of our students, Jaekwon Song, an opportunity to see his idol Josh Allen play.

It was an incredible experience heading down to the game with Jaekwon, my son and one of my son's friends to watch the game. The game itself wasn't anything special to me, but for Jaekwon it was everything. Yes the weather, as expected, was freezing, the Patriots unfortunately won, and Josh Allen only played one snap in the game, but to see the excitement and joy on Jaekon's face and in his smile was priceless. I will carry many memories of seeing the Patriots playing, winning games and championships over the years, but the memory of takin Jaekwon to this game will be ranked as one of my most cherished.

Go Patriots and on behalf of Jaekwon….. Go Bills.