

The Handout

an **arm** newsletter

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Sip & Paint

Litchfield Hall

ACADEMIC RESOURCE MENTORS—YOUR ARM HAS A HANDOUT FOR YOU!

IN THIS ISSUE

“Spring” Yourself Back Into the Swing of Things: How to Get Yourself Back Into the College Flow

by Brianna Walker, Centennial ARM

Welcome back, WestConn crew! The winter break is officially over and now it's time to get back into the college mindset. For many of us, this isn't the first break we've experienced but I believe the following advice will help everyone from freshmen to seniors on how to prepare for the semester ahead. Habits are easy to form, but they are also easy to break. Let's start this new semester off right!

Be prepared for class ahead of time

Even though syllabus week has come and gone, getting your materials together before class meets before the first time is always the best idea. Although most professors will want to go over their expectations and policies, they also might jump straight into material as soon as they can. If you prepare yourself and get your books and supplies beforehand, you'll be able to follow along with your professor and not worry like many other students. Plus, after the first class, you'll be contending with the other students who also need the same materials as you and it could be very possible that you will not be able to get what you need on time. To avoid the stress - set yourself up to succeed early! It is better to be safe than sorry.

Plan your semester - make your schedule

The first few weeks can seem like a frenzy in between the changing of classes, possibly adding and dropping, plus all of the events happening on campus (including programs in your residence halls by your RAs and ARMs). To make sure that you're not overwhelmed, plan out your schedule for at least three days in advance. For some, this could mean printing out your class schedule and color coding classes, free time and extra curriculums. For others, this could mean setting reminders on your phones for class, assignments, or even meetings. Make sure to pick a way of organization that fits for you and stick to it. If you have an on or off-campus job, don't forget to put those hours into your schedule too. Once again, the more prepared you are, the less likely you are to stress out later on.

Don't forget the happy thoughts!

College can be stressful, so it's important to take time for yourself. Even if that means fitting in 30 minutes to sit down and relax into your jam-packed schedule, then so be it. For all of the stress college creates, there needs to be time to destress. This could result in you going



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SUCCESS
SPOT

www.wconn.edu/housing/arm.asp

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The Echo newspaper has come back with a vengeance! Once a large, vibrant community comprised of a diversity of people passionate about Westconn, The Echo had disbanded until a couple of driven students revived it. Alyssa (Lulu) Meyers, the Editor in Chief, has agreed to sit down with me and answer a few questions.

Do you think that it's important for people of all different majors to get involved with the Echo?

Definitely, because you can have a whole bunch of writing majors, but we don't want to limit the club. We want to reach out to everyone, because we write about the school, we write to the students. We want to reach as many people as possible. We want to open it up to the school, all different people and perspectives.

What about, for example, Nursing or JLA majors?

They can write about health tips, or like 'here's a way to exercise, take care of yourself.' We also have an opinion editorial, and arts and entertainment. Any arts majors, theatre, or just someone interested in it. Or, say, sports and student life. Then there's My Voice. It's about diversity, spreading information about the types of people on campus. People can be very open, and get things out that they need to say.

Do you think it's important for all majors to get involved? That writing for the public is good experience for majors that may not do a lot of that type of writing?

I do think it's important to have samples of that for your resume. Say if you want to do something with PR, and you write stuff for the opinion or diversity column, it shows you have a lot of passion. You really have to get out there and be willing to be open to different things. Writing for My Voice, like about a minority, it shows you understand that there's cultural differences. That can really help not only just employers see that you know what you're talking about, that you have a good thought process, but the person that's writing will see things from a new perspective. That can help them.

So writing as a process, to be civically engaged. Communicate with the public. Say, HPX majors. A lot of jobs for them could include writing like blogging, advertising, newsletters.

What does freedom of the press mean to you, and to the diversity of students who might participate?

It means you're not limited. You decide the title, the questions, the people you talk to. It's not just being able to get your word out, it's

also being able to say what you need to say, and having freedom to write what you want because you feel like it's what needs to be written. Say you're raising awareness of problems. Say, I learned that there used to be LGBTQ+ stuff on the website. Now it's gone. Freedom of press is saying 'Hey, there might be people who actually need this. And we're being silenced.'

Do you think being a writer for The Echo gives students agency to go sniff out these things? And not just wonder about them, not just hear about it and be mad? That it gives them agency to go do something about it?

Yes. It was two years ago, Westconn was trying to merge the English and Writing departments together, and people did not like that. And so in English and Writing classes, teachers would tell students about it. And students wrote letters into the Echo on why they don't like it. Administrators read it. It worked. They didn't merge.

Can people send in just one-off articles, and not, say, come to meetings?

They can, as long as it's about WCSU. They don't have to be a part of the club, but it's preferable, because we want diversity, we want to meet the types of people we're talking to, and are working with us. If they really don't want to, they can, but getting to meet them just once would be great.

Do you have any reporters who are really good at sniffing things out?

Well, um, me! I go through all the old files, and I have some really great professors who trust me and tell me what's going on. It's rare nowadays, but people will tell us if something is going on. Through social media or whatever. I also want to put a box out front-for suggestions, to be anonymous. They can ask for advice from our advice column.

What do you see for The Echo going forward? Anything people can take charge of, forge forward with?

I've gone through so many of the old files, the old archives. A lot of people have spoken out about it or stood up. They would have an event and it would be written about, or they'd just write in, 'Hey, this is my opinion.' Almost everyone used to read the paper. People knew. Say something was happening that people didn't want, you could say, 'hey this is what's going on right now, and this is how you can possibly stop it, this is what you can do to help'. People can stand up for themselves. I want people to know that there's more to Westconn, and campus, than just what you do every day.

Are there any specific issues that might encourage people to come join, either to investigate or write about?

Yeah, there's a couple things. Last semester they did that meeting (about how) next year they're going to start having classes on Fridays, and so a lot of people tried to stand up for that but not a lot of people knew about it.

So a student could come and write an article about the meeting coming up for students to speak up about the new class schedule?

Yes, definitely.

What are you excited for?

I'm excited to bring in new members, to see what our regular crew is going to come up with. And, as always, I'm excited to keep posting new memes on our social media.

More memes. Memes are news now, right?

Haha, yes, and I'm also excited because we have to do an event and a fundraiser, and I'm excited to see what we come up with, and how we can get people bonding, get people connected. How can we really connect ourselves to the Echo. Last semester people suggested tee shirts or something, or business cards. How are we going to say We Are The Echo? How are we going to say, 'this is our crew? This is my crew?' You know, people can say these are my associates, friends, colleagues. I'm excited to see how everyone individually and together can progress.

The newspaper can be found at wcsuecho.org or by searching for WCSU Echo on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

E-mail echo@wcsu.edu with your interests, ideas, and questions, and stop by Room 217 in the Midtown Student Center any time to meet the crew!

Upcoming Meetings for next week the 29th - 1st:

- Monday the 29th at 12:15
- Tuesday the 30th at 11:00, or around 12:30 if no one is available at 11:00
- Wednesday the 31st at 12:15
- Thursday the 1st at 1:00



Attention all students who are paying for college! (So... all students!) It may not seem too close, but FAFSA's priority deadline of March 1st is nearing us quickly. It opened up on October 1st, but just because you missed the opening doesn't mean it's too late. Here are some things you might need to know to help you before filing.

Every year!

There's a misconception that you only need to fill out FAFSA before you start college. Wrong! When you fill out FAFSA, it's only for the upcoming school year. This year, you would be applying for financial aid for the 2018-19 school year, **so every year you need to fill it out again!** It's easier after the first time though, since FAFSA will remember a lot of your information from your account and will autofill some questions. Every year the new FAFSA opens on October 1st, so unless you don't plan to return to college the next year, it's in your best interest to fill it out!

Don't think you can get a scholarship?

I personally have had multiple friends tell me that they think that their family earns too much money to let them be considered for scholarships. But it's still worth trying to get scholarships. **Not all scholarships are need-based. There are scholar-**



ships depending on your academic success, talent, and all kinds of things that don't depend on your family's income.

You want to make sure you go to **fafsa.ed.gov** when applying for financial aid. Don't go to a .com website, because then you will be giving out private information to anyone *but* the government.

Deadlines

So let's say you were busy, got distracted, something came up, you wrote down the wrong date, you lost your access to the internet or somehow you weren't able to apply for FAFSA by March 1st. That's okay! There's still hope! If you noticed, the March 1st deadline I mentioned in the beginning of the article wasn't just a plain ol' deadline that cuts you off from ever being able to afford college again. It's a priority deadline. That means that if you file FAFSA on or before that date, there will be a lot more money available that you might be able to get access to. But if

you find yourself filling out FAFSA on March 2nd, there is still money and a chance for you to receive Federal Student Aid. Still, it's worth keeping in mind that **the earlier you apply for FAFSA, the better.**

And if missing the priority deadline worries you, maybe set a reminder on your phone to go off every day at a time you're free from now until March 1st to keep it in mind.

Finally...

Now, I'm sure this short little article doesn't answer all the questions you could possibly have about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If you had a different question, or even saw something here that sparked a new question for you, **bring it to the Financial Aid office in Old Main.** Helping students apply for financial aid is kind of their forte. Know that even though you might think you wouldn't be able to get any financial aid, your college might think differently. Filling out the application doesn't take too long, so I'd say it's worth a shot. Who knows, maybe you'll find yourself with some extra money toward your next year at WestConn.



to the gym to release endorphins, or heading back to your dorm and doing a face mask, or even just sitting on your couch for a few minutes to scroll endlessly through social media. Whatever makes you feel more relaxed - do it. Taking this time to decompress will have a positive effect on not only your mood, but your work ethic also. A person who balances work, school, and relaxation will do more than one who doesn't! You'll be able to see the change for yourself.

I sincerely hope that this advice was helpful! Even if you already knew this information, sometimes it's also beneficial to have a reminder to jog your memory and feel inspired. This semester will fly by, so make sure you're set up for success! Good luck everyone!

Resolutions

Cont. from pg. 3

DO NOT wait until January. For some reason we are conditioned to see the first of January as this monumental day for life changes. Any day before then would have been good enough to begin your new task. Sometimes if you wait too long to solve an issue, you allow it to get worse than it needs to be before it gets better. The moment you decide there is an aspect of your life that needs work, vow to make that change immediately.

Trust in the process. No profound changes happen overnight. If you look at the task in its entirety, you may become flustered or overwhelmed. As a result, you lose focus of what it is you have been working so hard for. Take it day by day and trust that if you put in the work, the results will come. You have longer than 365 days to complete your goals. Take your time.

Forgive yourself. In my opinion, this is the most crucial step. Try your best not to dwell in the past. Do not spend time harping on what you have done wrong or what you may do wrong in the future. Take each day as an opportunity to start over if you need to. Look at yourself in the mirror and forgive yourself for the mistakes you have made. Learn to love yourself again and move on from your past. Don't let it discourage you or define your future.

PODCAST

Sometimes you need some quick tips and help to improve your study and academic skills, but you don't have the time to sit through a lecture or look up some skills sheets. But you do have some time while you're eating or riding the bus to Midtown, so why not take a few minutes and listen to a podcast with study tips?

Indiana University has a terrific podcast on their website called [Click to Succeed](#). Most episodes are about 10 minutes long. Most of the podcasts are available both

as Audio only and as a Visual/ Video podcast. While some of the information you'll find might reference IU resources, most of them are generic information

that's good for all students, regardless of your location.

Right now, they have about 11 podcasts on their page, with topics like **Quizzes! Tests! Exams!; Time Management; Motivation, Resilience & Bouncing Back; Multiple Choice Mayhem;** and **Advisors & Choices**.

You can choose from the list and click "Download". The podcast will open up and play on your computer, phone, or tablet. Once again, this one's called [Click to Succeed](#).

There are many more out there, like [The College Info Geek](#) or [The Study Skills Handbook](#) podcast, which is aimed at high schoolers, but has a load of great tips. And it's British, so you get to listen to fun accents while you learn! These two podcasts are a bit longer than the IU podcasts.

Take a listen to a few when you have a little time to spare. At the very least, you'll maybe learn a new tip that makes your academic life better!



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Sometimes, where you study is just as important as *what* you study. Numerous studies have found that the place—or 'context'—in which you study affects how you'll remember that information. Wherever you live, wherever you tend to study, consider these tips for creating the best study space out of your environment.

1. **Pick one place, and like it.** Your brain catches on if you have one space for studying, and it enters "study-mode" faster. Pick a place that's accessible and that you like.
2. **Recreate your environment.** If you learned something in a classroom, make your space as much like a classroom as possible—sound, lighting, temperatures, noise. Memories are context-dependent, so the more it's like the place you learned the information, the better

you'll remember.

3. **Get comfy, but not TOO comfy.** Wear comfortable clothes, but maybe not pajamas, which will make you feel like sleeping rather than studying.
4. **Natural Light!** Humans love natural light. Even a little natural light reflected off a mirror brings warmth to the room, and help make it a better study space.
5. **Don't look into the light, and don't keep the lights too low!** Looking directly into a light isn't good for your eyes, but neither is struggling to see in light that's too low. Try making sure the base of your light is at chin level.
6. **Swap music for ambient noise.** Songs can put you in a good mood, but you may start listening to the

lyrics rather than looking at your notes. Try a white noise machine, or maybe orchestral music.

7. **Buy some plants.** Houseplants improve indoor air quality, and they help make the space feel serene. It makes things peaceful and easier to breathe.
8. **Turn off your phone!** Don't put it in a pocket or turn it over. Turn it off. It's a distraction. Turning it off is liberating!
9. **Keep positive.** Studying is often associated with negative feelings, but it shouldn't be. It's a good thing, and will help you with your future plans. Keep some family photos and inspirational quotes around. Keep the space tidy. Give yourself a reward when you study, too.
10. **Remember to leave.** Don't do other things in your study space (watching Netflix, Facetiming your mom). Keep the association with the space to studying, and your mind will remember that and click in. Then, when you leave, your mind will be ready for the break you've earned!

If you can keep these habits, you'll be well ahead of the studying game, and your grades will reflect the effort you've made.

Adapted from *10 Tips for Creating Your Ideal Study Space*, www.ameritech.edu/blog/tips-make-environment-best-study-space/

In life, we all have to deal with loss. Whether it's someone close to you or even your own death, it is inevitable. Benjamin Franklin once said, "In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes." Trust me, that is very true. It is such a scary thing to think about and even harder to witness.

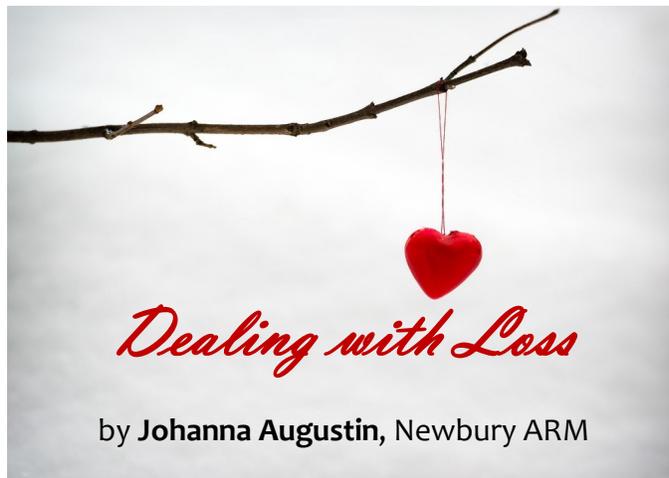
This past December, I lost my grandmother, who died at 90 years old, and that really hit hard for me. On January 2nd, one of our very own professors, Dr. Stephen Ward, WCSU Emeritus Professor in the Social Sciences Department, passed away. This isn't the first death that has been reported at this school. In the past two years, we have lost a few students as well, like Cassidy Westervelt, who died this past September and Michael "Diesel" DeAngelo, who died in April of 2016. If you knew any of these people, or if you have personally lost someone, here are some ways to deal with loss:

Realization

Realization is the most difficult part of this process. Our sadness, fear, and anger tend to get the best of us at this stage. We often turn to negative outlets, literally anything that will get our minds off that terrible feeling of losing someone important in our lives.

Let it Out

IT IS OKAY TO CRY! Many people, especially men, think that crying is a sign of weakness but studies show that people who cry are the strongest. When you cry, you are brave enough to show your emotions to others and that takes a lot. When others tell you to stop crying and to wipe those tears away, cut them



off because you don't need that negativity in your life!

Share your pain with someone

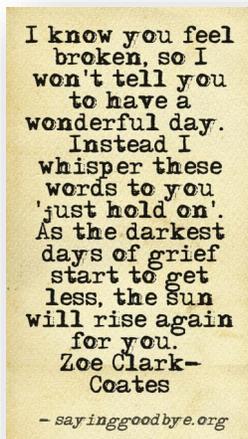
Sharing your pain with others is a great way to get those feelings out. They can be a friend, family member, or even a co-worker. If you're worried that they may not care or won't have time for you, let them know in advance before you talk to them that you are feeling sad and want to talk. Stay away from non-compassionate people! They will not understand your pain and in many cases, can elevate it. Be careful who you share your pain with.

No regrets

We all have regrets. There are always those thoughts like "I wish to could have seen them more" or "I never got to say goodbye". You cannot change the past and it's okay. You have to accept that there was nothing you could do about the loss, and you have to stop blaming yourself. The best thing for you to do is to stay connected with the ones around you and work to build better relationships.

Seek extra help

There are some great resources that you can go to on campus. The Counseling Center (Midtown Student Center, Room 222) is a great place to go to for this situation. They deal with many issues like grief and loss, loneliness and isolation, anxiety, coming out, depression and self-esteem. To



book an appointment, you can go to the Counseling Center or call them at (203) 837-8690.

Work your way towards happiness

The final way to deal with loss is to find peace and happiness with the matter. It may take days, weeks, months and even years to come to peace, but everyone heals on their own timeline. Some great ways to find happiness are to think of the good times that you had with this person. The good memories of love and laughter soothe the soul by bringing to light how great this person was to you.

You can also find good and safe ways to distract yourself, like joining a club on campus or going to the gym. The best thing to do is to surround yourself with good, positive people and make the best out of your life.

"Some people are so afraid to die that they never begin to live." -Henry Van Dyke. Live your life to the fullest and follow your dreams. Live to have no regrets and shoot for the stars.

new arms
academic resource mentors

Join us in welcoming two new ARMs to the team: Heidi Ohngemach in Pinney, and Johanna Augustin in Newbury.



Heidi is a music education major, concentrating in violin. She's joined the staff of Pinney Hall, and is excited to be on board. Heidi invites you to find her playing her violin or viola in the orchestra, one of the operas, or musicals!



Johanna steps in as the Newbury ARM. She's a junior Secondary Education major with an English concentration, and you can find her also working at the Child Care Center and in the IT&I computer

labs.

Please try to stop by their programs or office hours to say hi, and don't be afraid to ask a question or two!



CAREER SUCCESS BEGINS WITH YOU!

By **Victor Namer**, Pinney ARM

Ten years from now, where do you see yourself? Are you working in medicine, working in education, or working with your hands to create? As college students, we are at a precarious point in our lives here at WCSU. This juncture allows us the ability to find our passions and pursue them both within the classroom and outside. While our time here constitutes an environment of learning, we must also engage in an environment of action. This action entails reaching outside the classroom into the world around us, and this begins with making connections professionally, engaging in internship experiences, and taking the next step in furthering our futures.

Here at WCSU, the Career Success Center is a tool to help actualize your visions. This department works hands on with students to personalize and assist in your career development. Located on the third floor of the Westside Campus Center, the Career Success Center provides a wide array of programming, workshops and services to support career development for ALL WCSU students and alumni.

All students, from freshman to grad students, should use these services to

help them understand more about themselves and the direction they want to pursue. Here, you can look into different career fields and industries, get experience, network, connect with alumni, and so much more. They are available online, via phone, email, workshops, special events, walk-in hours, in the classroom, and even via personalized one-on-one career coaching.

In addition, the Career Success Center now offers an interactive online platform for students called WESTCONN Works. This is where students can find jobs from employers who are looking for a WCSU student! This is also a great tool to connect with this department, post a resume, learn about/sign up for workshops, make an appointment with a career coach, and get advice regarding any questions you have.

BUT... the Career Success Center also has a whole other suite of powerful software to help with some of the nuanced needs of finding careers and jobs. Here you can find Optimal Resume, an online software where you can create a custom resume from scratch, or use a pre-made template to

input your information! You will also find LinkedIn, a powerful networking tool where you can connect with those from all professions and sell yourself online. There are many more options to choose from on this platform of which you as a student can take advantage!

All of these tools are also available via their website. These include everything from a quick personal assessment tool called "Focus2" to great career videos and everything in between!

In the end, your college career is going to be what you make of it. You have the opportunity to make it into something more than you thought possible, but you have to be willing to reach out and grab it. Using the tools at your disposal, you can achieve and aspire for more in your time here at Western. Let your WCSU experience take you out of your comfort zone by trying something new, and most of all let it be your guide towards finding your direction post-grad and your "Western Way".

Good luck scholars, and go make waves!



January

William Carlos Williams



Again I reply to the triple winds
running chromatic fifths of derision
outside my window:

Play louder.

You will not succeed. I am
bound more to my sentences

the more you batter at me
to follow you.

And the wind,
as before, fingers perfectly
its derisive music.



Good Semester or Bad— Finding Your Way Forward

by Shannon Lynch, Fairfield ARM

You finished your fall semester: Congratulations!

As a student at WCSU, you put in so much work every semester. Countless hours are spent studying for exams, writing papers, and rehearsing group projects. For some, it comes easily. For others, the work that accompanies earning a degree can be difficult and hard to master, especially as a freshman. So after the fall semester, you may be struggling with the best way to tackle the new semester in front of you. It's situational. Not every student had a good semester, nor did every student have a bad semester. Here are a couple of situations with options for you!

The Fall 2017 semester was a mess. You took 17 credits, and they were all extremely difficult. You started your new job on campus, and it left you with less time to study. You had difficulty with your friends because you weren't spending any time with them. On top of all of this, you had problems with your roommate. They were up late, and disrupted your studying. Having a disrespectful roommate took a toll on your sleep, your studying, and really hit hard on your academics. All of these external forces left you with a GPA you weren't happy with, and now you don't know what to do... Where can you find help?

Fear not! WCSU offers so many resources to help you get back on track and stay on track. Some of your best resources are in the library. Not only is it a quiet place for you to truly focus on studying, there are resources that can specifically help you with what you need to study! The Tutoring Resource Center, located on the second floor of the Ruth Haas Library, will set you up with a tutor who can help you in the subjects you find most difficult. For all of your writing needs, you can also schedule

that you meet the criteria for your paper. They can also help you make sure that your essay has the right citations. WCSU offers additional resources like the Counseling Center to help you with things that may be bothering you outside of the classroom! As always, PLEASE reach out to your ARMs if you need guidance or assistance accessing these resources.

Now imagine you are on the opposite side of the spectrum, you had an amazing semester. Your classes made sense, you were optimally organized, you had a lot of fun with your family and friends and it seemed like everything was falling in place for you. How do you maintain excellence?

For some, being able to maintain high grades comes easily. For others, it's a constant struggle. My primary suggestion is that you evaluate yourself. Look back on fall 2017 and decide what techniques were most effective and which were not. Eliminate the things that made your life more difficult and continue to thrive with the things that helped you the most. In addition, don't let your success deter you from taking full advantage of campus resources. The Tutoring Resource Center and Writing Center will only help you be a better student. Using campus resources is beneficial because it fills in the gaps and enhances your learning. In addition to utilizing resources, consider becoming a PASS member in your residence hall. PASS looks excellent on your resume and gives you the opportunity to share your knowledge with students who might need your help!

Whether you are thriving or just surviving, remember that you are capable! You have accomplished so much to get this far and all of your ARMs are here to support you.

a meeting with the Writing Center. At the Writing Center, proficient writers will help you perfect your essay or ensure



Housing Announcements:

Fall 2018 Room Selection

It's the start of spring, and already, it's time to begin thinking about next fall and where you'll want to live. The first thing you'll need to do is to pay next year's housing deposit. It's our only indication that you plan to stay on campus, so it's very important that you take care of this payment on time. Deposits for returning students are due on or before **MARCH 20th**! More importantly, watch your campus email for information about the room selection process, and look for signs and meetings in your buildings which will explain the process. Knowledge is power—don't lose the room and roommates you want because you don't know what you need to do.

RA/ARM Selection—Fall 2018

It's also not too early to think about becoming a **Resident Assistant (RA)** or **Academic Resource Mentor (ARM)** next year! Applications are available starting January 22, and mandatory selection activities are in February. Look for posters, meetings, and other information about these great jobs.

In addition to getting some of your college expenses waived, you also have the opportunity to connect and build your own leadership skills. These jobs prepare you for a world of other positions you may never even have thought about.

Questions? Ask your RAs and ARMs, your own RDs, or Selection coordinators Kevin Brenzel (Centennial RD) or Shevy Booze (Litchfield RD).



Student Flu Vaccine Clinic

Tuesday, February 6th from 11 am—2 pm in Health Service.

Bring your Insurance Card. No appointment needed!



** Don't forget to look for campus events in the WOW email each Thursday! **

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



What do you think? Have something you'd like to share about this newsletter or other housing issues? Want to give a suggestion for a topic you're interested in knowing more about? Let us know.

Drop us a line at housing@wcsu.edu