A WINTER LETTER FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Welcome back from the Men & Masculinities KC! It’s a new term and a new year! So much to look back on and reflect on and so much to look forward to!

This new Winter 2014 Edition of the newsletter has a slightly new look! The NASPA MMKC logo is now displayed prominently on the cover. For easy browsing, a table of contents has been included. This is especially helpful for the longer editions of the newsletter, which is always a joy because it means professionals are ready to share their stories, programs, initiatives, and thoughts with the everyone!

In this edition, we have articles that range from hot topic issues, student development, student success, open letters, and a book review. My hope is that this newsletter continues to grow in it’s content and it’s creativity garnered by the MMKC Community and beyond! If you have any suggestions for the future of this newsletter, feel free to contact me! In the next month or so, I will be releasing the Conference Edition of the newsletter and we are excited to endorse programs that will be at the NASPA Annual Conference! Until then, I hope to meet many of you in Baltimore!

Jack Korpob, MMKC Newsletter Editor

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**ARE COLLEGE MEN FACING A FINANCIAL CRISIS?**

It’s no secret that college students and their families are borrowing more and more to pay for college than even before. A 2012 report by Education Sector, a non-profit, non-partisan education think tank, discussed the risk factors for students borrowing to pay for college. Many students face the challenge of paying off large debt loads, but one group in particular; students that drop out before completing a degree are the most in danger. Since these students did not complete a college credential, they do not have the earning power to pay back these loans.

For students that earn a degree, women are still at a disadvantage to their male counterparts. Forbes Magazine reported in November 2012, that women with college degrees, with the same major, in the same type of jobs and working similar hours, still earned 7% less than their male peers. This statistic should be alarming to all of us. Even with the great strides women in all fields have made in the past 30 years, their income still lags behind men. No one is going to dispute that, nor do I believe they should. I, however, think that we are missing a crucial part of this discussion, and that is the debt load carried by students that are not earning a degree. As we all know, college graduates far outpace the earning potential of those that do not have a college credential. Where does that leave the students that drop out of college without the increased earning potential and still carry large amounts of student debt? What does this mean for college men who are not completing their degrees?

The article “Gender, Debt, and Dropping Out of College” published in the journal *Gender & Society*, proposes that men drop out more often because they have less tolerance for the debt that is needed to complete a degree. On average, men tolerate $2,000 less educational debt than women do. So, we have a situation where men are enrolling in college (although at lower rates than women) and then once they reach a level of debt they can no longer tolerate, they leave college. These men now have college debt and fewer long term prospects for earnings that will allow them to pay off this debt. Not only do we now have a crisis in retention, persistence and degree attainment, we now have a compounded financial crisis for our male students.

What can we do to better educate and support college men to complete their degrees so they are not setting themselves up for a lifetime with the burden of unmanageable student debt? Is pushing the college completion agenda enough? Should we also be doing more to educate our male students around how to be savvier about the debt load they are carrying, especially given their increased likelihood of dropping out and taking their student loan debt with them? What does this mean for loan default rates? Are institutions that traditionally have had higher male enrollment going to suffer when these students drop out and default on their loans? These are all important questions to be asking to ensure that we are doing our best to support our male students and not set them up for long term failure, especially for those that will not complete a college credential.

**References**


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According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2009), male college students surpass their female counterparts in only one third of its surveyed categories. Two of those categories consist of leisure and fitness. Research concludes that women achieve at a higher rate than males and are more engaged in studying and pursuing graduate and professional degrees (Weaver-Hightower, 2010). At the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the Office of the Provost convened the Male Initiative Committee in 2012 to address the decline in retention rates and identify barriers to male academic success. Monthly meetings consisted of discussions about campus trends regarding male academic success, campus involvement, counseling and development needs, and analyzing institutional data. The committee responded by planning and introducing its inaugural Male Summit on campus, in October 2013.

Hosted on a Friday evening, the event opened with a keynote address from Head Men’s Basketball Coach, Mr. Cuonzo Martin. Perhaps the most significant and valuable asset of the Summit and the preceding Male Initiative Committee, is its collaborative composition. Organizationally, the committee is chaired by an academic affairs staff person and the rest of the committee consists of: student affairs professionals, enrollment and student services staff, tenure-track faculty members and academic advising professionals. In addition to Coach Martin’s keynote address, the Summit featured an interactive panel of male staff, faculty and students, and four discussion-based, concurrent presentations. The committee identified four key areas of emphasis for the one day summit: academics, health and wellness, campus involvement and masculinity and identity. As participants attended each session, presenters encouraged them to: challenge previously held notions of their identities as men, to seek resources on campus related to their academic success, to be proactive concerning their emotional and physical wellness, and to become more engaged within the campus community. One fruitful attraction of the Summit was the onsite wellness check-ins, in which participants were able to get their blood pressure tested and have their body mass index calculated. Surprisingly, many students realized that their perceived physical health was not aligned with their actual physical health. Another impactful and innovative presentation method was the use of TED talks (via YouTube), focusing on masculinity and male identity development, which laid the foundation for our discussions about masculinity.
Overall, the inaugural Male Summit proved to be worthwhile and encouraging, both for the students that attended, and the faculty and staff that serve on the Male Initiative Committee. We received positive quantitative and qualitative feedback from the participants pointing toward the achievement of the following learning outcomes: articulate healthy behaviors that will improve my academic success at UT, increased understanding of male identity, define the ways in which my male identity intersects with my other identities, confidently challenge my male peers to investigate their own masculinity and demonstrate an increased desire to be an involved member of my community. In addition, all participants expressed interest in attending future Male Summits.

Moving forward, the Male Initiative Committee is identifying ways to increase the awareness of the Male Summit, with hopes of increasing the attendance of students and campus administrators and faculty. At the current time, the committee is reviewing assessment findings from Male Summit participants and gathering additional feedback via focus groups. The long term aim of the committee is to create consistent and intentional learning experiences, leadership development, professional and career enrichment opportunities, and identity exploration for male students, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

References


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Social and Emotional Intelligence and the Positive Impact on Student Success

I began my work as the Director of the Office of Black Student Services (OBSS) at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) on September 10, 2013. After just three months of being on campus, I was immediately struck by the lack of engagement and involvement of African American males within both the African American community on campus and the university community at large. As I delved deeper into my work and began to interface with more students, I was immediately impressed with the caliber and the depth of the African American males on campus. They were charismatic, intelligent, compassionate, genuine and seemed to be natural leaders. These interactions led me to my own series of internal questions: “Why were they not engaging? Why were they not applying for leadership roles for our African American cultural clubs on campus? Why were they not applying to be Orientation leaders or members of student government? Do they not know how much power they have?” Then I thought, “maybe they need some tools, empowerment, encouragement and strategy to manage and navigate their way around campus.”

During graduate school, I focused much of my research on the positive impact of the implementation of a social and emotional learning program on a school site. Literature on the subject draws attention to the importance of retaining and cultivating this skill set regardless of age. B.C. Pubililus Syrus’ statement “rule your feelings, lest your feelings rule you,” served as my call to action. I pondered further, “Did they not feel worthy to be in an institution of higher education? Did they not feel good about themselves?”

Feelings and emotions govern our experiences and our existence as human beings. Our ability to socialize and engage with others is incumbent upon the individuals synthesis of social intelligence, which Salovey & Mayer (1989) define as “the ability to understand and manage people” (p. 187). E.L. Thorndike expands upon this definition stating that it is the “ability to perceive one’s own and other’s internal states, motives, and behaviors, and to act toward them optimally on the basis of that information” (Salovey & Mayer 1989, p. 187). Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts (2012) constructed a review in which they identified four primary operations of emotional intelligence. First, they suggest that human emotions serve as “data” and serve as a language of discovery to help make sense out of varied situations and scenarios. Second, they suggest that emotions serve as “biasing stimuli,” proclaiming that emotions have the power to change the way we respond to certain situations. Third, emotions act as indicators to our executive functioning helping to formulate a “goal centered response” to situations at hand. Finally, they note that emotions are crucial to our problem-solving and decision-making processes by serving as “adaptive functions.”

Social and emotional learning positively affects student’s academic achievement, physical heath, citizenship and helps to lessen student’s engagement in failed relationships, interpersonal violence, substance abuse and maladjustment (Elias et al 1997; Zins et al 2004). The Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning reports that “social and emotional learning helps students become good communicators, cooperative members of a team, effective leaders and caring, concerned members of their communities. It teaches them how to set and achieve goals and how to persist in the face of challenges. These are precisely the skills that today’s employers consider important for the workforce of the future” (www.caes.org). Theorist John Dewey notes the process of education engages the psychological and sociological side of the learner. He believes that the learners “own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting-point for all education” (Flinders & Thornton 2009, - 34). This practice is crucial to a students overall development as it gives “him command of himself, training him that he will have the full and ready use of all his capacities that his eye and ear and hand may be tools ready to command, that his judgment may be capable of grasping the conditions under which it was to work, and the executive forces trained to act economically and efficiently” (p. 35) resulting in a more self aware, engaged individual within their school community. Upon conclusion, engagement in this Social and Emotional learning program allows students an opportunity to explore the capacity of their feelings and their emotions while also learning how to problem solve, set goals and establish an environment where empathy and mutual respect are paramount (Payton et al 2000).

One year later, with the above research as our foundation and thanks to an internal university grant from the Vice President for Intercultural Affairs, the Praxis Academy, a program designed to empower, enrich, engage and retain African American male students on campus through personal development, identity development and storytelling was implemented at Loyola Marymount University. This pilot program, in partnership with the Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education meets once a week on Fridays from 1:00pm-2:30pm. Additionally, the curriculum includes identity development, career support, professional workshops in collaboration with the African American Alumni Association, wherein a male alum presents to the students on their undergraduate experience and shares personal
insight on their professional life and how they were able to navigate the campus during their time as a student at LMU. The cohort of students is also tasked with the development and implementation of a campus impact project during the spring semester. All students in the program are also paired with an African American faculty or staff member, as I wanted to build a community of love, support and encouragement, where all members know that they can count on each other and where excellence is our guiding post.

My hope in the implementation of this program was to empower these young men to begin the process of dreaming and realizing that they are already equipped with all of the necessary tools to be successful. The Academy also sponsors monthly community check-in’s with 1st and 2nd year African American males who are not enrolled in the academy and male members of the African American faculty and staff to provide an opportunity for support as the Praxis Academy is not able to enroll every single African American male on campus.

Upon conclusion, I hope that students leave with the feeling that they can navigate their own social and emotional landscape, thus making them more apt to engage and interact on campus and in the world. Two of the hallmarks of Jesuit education are “cura personalis,” a Latin phrase, which means, the care of the person and “magis” another Latin term which means the quest for more. Loyola Marymount University is committed to the holistic development of students, empowering them to be excellent and to continue to change, grow and evolve on their quest for the magis. This quest for excellence is our guiding principle – it’s what we do as Jesuit educators, and ultimately, this leads to the transformational piece that I enjoy so much about education.

**Explanation of Crest:**
- **Interlocked Chain** – genuine commitment to community and service
- **Torch** – personal excellence and the magis
- **Interlocked Hands** – networking and brotherhood
- **Continent of Africa** – African identity development and pride
- **Fingerprint (behind the interlocked hands)** – personal handprint; empowering students to take ownership of the campus and leave the imprint somewhere

**Learning Outcomes**
- Identify and embrace talents and gifts contributing to a more confident and defined sense of self
- Develop a keen understanding of social and emotional learning competencies and their affects on society
- Cultivate a sense of personal leadership through education and training
- Explore the history of people of African descent
- Develop a network of professional contacts.
- Enhance understanding of Ignatian values as a foundational tool for students’ overall development
- Cultivate a sense of scholarship and research
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of the human experience and embody the ideals of interculturalism.
- Become engaged and active as an LMU Lion and university citizen

**Benefits**
- Mentorship by upperclassmen and black faculty/staff
- Career development support
- Alumni networking opportunities with the African American Alumni Association
- Small cohort model to ensure personal support and development
- Service Learning opportunity

**Response**
“The Praxis Academy has made me realize that I have everything that I need to be successful. It has empowered me and made me hungry. I feel even more compelled to make not only my family proud, but my entire race. Praxis has made me realize that my dreams aren’t big enough. I haven’t realized my complete identity, but Praxis Academy has definitely played a role in the start of me wanting to know who I am, my goals and dreams. I have realized that
if I don’t know who I am and what I want, I don’t know where I’m going.”

“I’ve began a self analysis that I’ve wanted to start for a long time now... I’ve been digging deeper and realizing who I am (more than just the obvious) and who I want to be. The story of self assignment has really made me think about the stage I’m in. I’m realizing that life is not constant. Things always change. People always change. I am always changing.

“The Praxis Academy has made me realize that I have everything that I need to be successful. It has empowered me and made me hungry. I feel even more compelled to make not only my family proud, but my entire race. Praxis has made me realize that my dreams aren’t big enough. I haven’t realized my complete identity, but Praxis Academy has definitely played a role in the start of me wanting to know who I am, my goals and dreams. I have realized that if I don’t know who I am and what I want, I don’t know where I’m going.”

References


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The Revolution Starts At Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities

Ed. by Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, & Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha
South End Press, 2011
325 pages

What is this book?
A diverse collection of essays, personal stories, and reflections shedding light on the very present challenge of "personal accountability" within various activist communities. Through the voices of the writers included in this anthology, the editors of The Revolution Starts At Home provide readers with insights into the pernicious nature of intimate partner violence that occurs within social justice circles, as well as a compassionate exploration of various attempts made to restore peace, repair harm, and (when appropriate) reintegrate the accused back into the community. Additionally, woven throughout these personal narratives are brief histories behind the founding of organizations such as UBUNTU, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Community United Against Violence (CUAV), and many other groups who have been integral in advocating for the welfare and safety of those who cannot advocate for themselves.

What isn’t this book?
A cure-all for the vices and violence still perpetrated within communities that should share socially just values and understandings of oppression (in all its forms). Unfortunately, despite the fact that many of us have chosen to make ending oppression a primary value in our everyday lives, it doesn’t make us immune to perpetuating the same kinds of violence and harm on those closest to us. The contributing authors who are featured in Revolution deeply explore the shortcomings, challenges, setbacks, strategies, and successes that they have experienced during their forays into establishing “community accountability” practices.

What does this book do?
First and foremost, Revolution calls us to pause and reflect on current definitions of "accountability" within our social justice circles. A recurring theme that shows up throughout many of the book’s chapters is the notion that "accountability" is regularly framed as an external process that happens to somebody; rather than an internal process that happens within somebody. Because of this, we too often default to external systems and services to hold others accountable when we feel as though our rights have been violated. For those of us who have "grown up" through Higher Education graduate programs and various entry-level Student Affairs positions, we have undoubtedly been taught to memorize certain mandated reporting protocols, information gathering strategies, and the (largely) punitive mechanisms in place to hold students accountable for their behaviors and actions. We assume that everyone is taught that police, law enforcement, and the U.S. judiciary system are set up to provide a safe, fair process to bring about justice and security. However, for many marginalized communities, experiences with these so-called "safety nets" has been anything but safe and just. The Revolution Starts At Home challenges that default by proposing alternative methods to holding perpetrators of violence through the use of community mobilization and action.

This essay collection also amplifies the voices of many identities and communities that mainstream social justice organizations have yet to fully integrate, or represent. These reflections illuminate the intense layers of obstacles and challenges that often prevent individuals with intersecting identities from seeking support or assistance escaping unsafe relationships. One author’s account highlights the shortcomings of personal care systems and the dangerous codependency created when a differently-
Takeaways to think about after reading...
If we are willing to subscribe to the notion that teaching around (and striving for) gender equity does not have to be a "zero sum" game, then perhaps the same notion extends to "community accountability" and our country's legal system. A famous philosopher once postured that any virtue taken to the extreme can quickly become a vice; I believe that the same outlook applies to the ways in which we should strive to bring the two ends of today’s “accountability spectrum” closer together. What would it look like to step back and completely reframe our understandings of concepts like “restorative justice”? What would it look like to train court-appointed attorneys in sensitivity around LGBTQ issues? What would it look like to ensure that translators do not re-victimize a survivor by altering their story as its told to the court? What would it look like to utilize the legal and prison system as the ultimate repercussions for a perpetrator’s failure to cooperate with community-based support and personalized accountability plans?

Additionally, as ever-evolving activists and social justice educators, we should take more opportunities to talk with each other about our personal philosophies and standpoints on various issues. How often do we (as the MMKC, as NASPA members, as educators) naively assume that we share the same values and definitions as fellow members of our organizations? How often do we stop and ask each other to define crucial concepts like “accountability,” “violence,” and “progress”? How would our KC community respond if one of our members was accused of violence of any kind? How would we support the survivor? Would we choose to participate in the accountability of the alleged perpetrator? For as The Revolution Starts At Home soberingly reminds us, we are all imperfectly human; we all hold the capacity and potential to do harm, both intentionally and unintentionally. As educators, we should be the first in line to learn and practice self-assessment, self-reflection, and self-care (no matter how many "train the trainer" workshops we’ve facilitated).

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To My Brothers On Campus

Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche states a feminist is “a person who believes in the social, economic, and political equality of the sexes.” Beyoncé’s new self-titled album contained this statement in a song titled, “Flawless”. I see a new era of growth in the United States centered on women. I find it intriguing and exciting. I am happy and I believe men should embrace the woman’s fight against her daily fears of society’s patriarchy.

It requires the cooperation of men to support feminism with our daily decisions. Institutions alone cannot enforce equality. Men in our nation’s colleges and universities set the tone. We can increase the security a woman feels in our workspace and classrooms. For our male students, the way we speak and hug female friends determines a lot. The sexual energy one exudes may resemble that of a teenager yet our strength and presence resembles that of a man. We must be aware of our interactions with women. As the hook up culture cements itself in higher education, the discipline of men should improve as a positive correlation with sexual engagement.

Gaining consent from a woman needs to increase as well. Many a times, people communicate without words. We imagine and assume gestures are in our favor. Her voice is the strongest action. Be clear in your statements and listen to her. “Stop” and “no” at any time demands our obedience from both sexes.

Sexual assault can occur both ways. Women may pressure men and sexualize us. In a party space, men are assumed to be intoxicated and sexual. For every male, we present ourselves uniquely in social spaces. Each man has his own standards of engagement. We vary greatly. Acknowledge every woman’s right and ability to establish herself too. There is no cookie cutter approach to a woman. Each human being differs, even twins. Feminism requires listening to each sex and gender independently. As a result, collegiate citizens hold a myriad of personal boundaries.

Continued on page 12
The borderline between a wonderful romantic experience and rape is thin. Any moment our partner physically or verbally disagrees with our actions, we must stop what we are doing. Our lives depend on it. Males are biologically designed to be strong. Our testosterone allows us to gain muscle development. In social and professional spaces, we must be aware of its influence in our interactions.

Each day our male privilege allows our deep voices to dominate conversation. Our physical presence determines respect levels and can invoke fear into women/men alike. When in doubt of your perception, inquire from friends and colleagues about how they see you. Pros and cons must be welcomed.

We deny ourselves the excitement of life, when we assume the world is made to adjust to us. The true leadership of a man stems from listening. In friendly and flirty communications, we may have a misconception of others comfort. It is important to be critical of body and verbal language.

Most often a man assaults a friend or familiar person. We hardly have sex with strangers. Since no two people see the same movie in exactly the same fashion, any encounter can hold a different truth. Think wisely. Be critical. Make every day count. We can change the world positively with our actions or lack thereof.

With women treated as equals socially, politically, and economically, we can improve the United States of America. Women have brought many great benefits to the world despite the glass ceiling and hypersexualization. Our male dominated society has to embrace the strength of women. Our voice remains powerful today. When we use it tomorrow to encourage a woman to feel comfortable, society will improve. Will Smith once recalled setting out to build a wall in a day. He failed. He carefully laid each brick and soon, he built a wall with his brother under the guidance of his father. Together, we can continue to build our home into a secure nation for humanity.

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She Lets Me Do Her Laundry

She really lets me do her laundry, with 'she' referring to my significant other, partner, or girlfriend. Another way I could put it is she trusts me to do her laundry. I recently found myself amazed by this fact, amazed that it had just sort of happened, and it could be credited to the fact that we have been dating for over a year, I just moved into a new apartment with laundry included, or she truly trusts me to wash and dry her clothes correctly.

Either way I am pretty excited, nervous, amazed, and humbled by this experience. I know some people may say, “It is just laundry”, but to me and more importantly to her it is more than that. One of the habits I quickly learned about my partner was that she was particular about how she did her laundry. There was a system. A system with rules, regulations, and exceptions that she believed yielded the best results for her clothing.

Once we started doing laundry around one another I had the opportunity to observe this system, and my clothes began being subject to the system. There is nothing really absurd about this laundry system. I pull the jeans inside out, zippers get zipped up, certain items are never put in the dryer, and there are mesh bags for some articles of clothing (usually if they go in the bag they do not go in the dryer, but this rule does not work backwards). These are apparently pretty typical laundry rules—just ones I never followed before.

This process is important to her not because she possesses some gendered stereotype obsession with clothing, but because she believes in retaining a high quality in her possessions. This belief is one of the many things that attract me to her. She believes that we should do everything in our power to keep things in our lives in good quality so they can last.

Now, I have not always been allowed to do her laundry, in fact there have been many laundry days in which I can recall her watchful eye as we loaded and unloaded the machines. What was important for me to note here was that it took time for this to happen. She did not automatically trust me to do her laundry, but after proving to her that I could in fact be trusted with putting the lace top in the mesh bag I was allowed to do the laundry.

For me, the ability to show my partner that I am worthy of her trust through every load of laundry is just another way that we continue to strengthen our relationship. Trust has to be earned, proved, and maintained. This is not to say that if I forget to clasp a bra one time that our trust will be damaged or out the window, but if that became a habit it would not only be damaging to the clothes it was washed with, but potentially our relationship.

So, the first time I realized I was doing her laundry was one of the most humbling experiences because she trusted me enough to put her laundry in with my dirty clothes from a weekend visit.

It became our laundry; it became another symbol of our trust.


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Special thanks to everyone who contributed to the Fall Edition of the MMKC Newsletter!

Interested in writing for our next issue? See the last page for details and the submission timeline!

Questions? Email the MMKC Newsletter at pkorpob@gmail.com!
The purpose of the Men & Masculinities Knowledge Community (MMKC) is to provide a venue for discussion, research, and the distribution of information about men's gender identity development, in the context of college campuses.

The goals of the MMKC are:

1. To make gender identity(ies) a salient lens for viewing and working with male staff and students.
2. To develop and distribute resources that will enhance student affairs professionals’ ability to respond to the needs of male students.
3. To inform the profession about new research and practices regarding the development of masculine identities as manifested in people in general, and men in particular (e.g. inclusive of masculinities performed by Trans/Queer, women.)
4. To offer technical and creative assistance to colleagues as they develop programs and services for male students.
5. To assist Student Affairs professionals in navigating the tensions between male privilege and men’s personal needs (e.g. challenge and support,) including support through the professionals’ personal frustrations in this regard.
6. To create guides to best practices in teaching male students about diversity, gender identity, and other critical issues affecting their personal growth.
7. To promulgate and/or distribute men’s issues and development scholarship for use in graduate preparation programs.

This KC was founded upon a pro-feminist, anti-racist, gay-affirmative agenda with the hope of providing resources to increase multi-cultural competence among male students by providing the NASPA membership with tools to invite and engage men into this process. The underlying assumption is that men in general are interested in social justice, capable of enacting it, and that they need language and a connection to the process.

Article Submission Guidelines

1. Articles should be no less than 300 words and no more than 1500.
2. All articles should be relevant to the mission and purpose of the Men and Masculinity Knowledge Community.
3. Articles should include the name of the author, job title, email and school affiliation.
4. Anyone with an article that is time sensitive should inquire with the Technology Chair for deadlines.
5. Please take the time to proof and edit your work.
6. All work should be saved in .doc (Word) format.
7. Photos and artwork should be sent as high quality .jpg files.
8. All submissions must be sent to the Newsletter Editor, Jack Korpob, at pkorpob@gmail.com.

MMKC Newsletter Submission Timeline

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