Embrace Transformation and Use Critical Thinking
by Laura D. Harver

I recently received a lovely card from a student who will be transferring this fall. She not only expressed her heartfelt appreciation, but she said “Thank you for helping stretch my box, step out of it and be unafraid to break it. I am grateful for your wisdom and guidance.”

You may ask yourself, why are these words important? Well, I will share more about my words and my message behind them to our W.O.W participants and to you, the reader of this newsletter. One of the reasons for my words is to continuously inspire all women to reach for their dreams, envision success and set S.M.A.R.T. goals to move towards their dreams. One of the ways that I do this is by encouraging them to expand the box, step outside of the box and break the box, if needed.

As I write, I think of how we were taught to color within the lines as children. This habit was rewarded sometimes with words of affirmation or rewards like stars and even grades. These positive rewards helped to shape our behavior, so that we were transformed into producing desired behaviors and results. Still, while our behavior was being shaped so were our minds. Judgments were also being formed. Some people may have even begun to only think that what is most valuable should be traced and colored in. If unexamined this could hamper creativity, transformation and innovation.

Hence, this mind-set may have helped you before, but ask yourself, “How is my mind-set and my behavior serving my vision for success now?” Is it hindering my judgment now? Examine yourself and the situation. Coloring within the lines may be needed; coloring outside of the lines may be needed, or perhaps both. So, now is the time for you to explore and use your critical thinking skills to determine what will serve you best in order to succeed. Embrace the transformation and use critical thinking.

Women of Wisdom in Reflection
by Chantel Walker, PGCC and W.O.W Graduate

My name is Chantel Walker and I am a graduate of Prince George's Community College, as well as a Women of Wisdom graduate. It’s extremely relieving to look back on all that I’ve accomplished at PGCC, aside from getting my associates degree in Business Administration. There were many days filled with doubt, fear, and even too little time to get everything done, but with the right amount of support and motivation behind me, I conquered my first two years of college successfully!

My first W.O.W meeting was much more than I expected and the whole program has been a reflection of that. I’ve grown so much as a result of simply attending meetings, discussion forums, and even random walk-in sessions with Ms. Harver. I grew as I learned about other women’s experiences. I realized that it was okay to ask for help when needed. I was able to learn something new and refreshing about myself and others. It seems like every single meeting was different from the previous one and always an opportunity to improve myself or find room for improvement.

Also, there were many days that I wanted to give up on school and not put forth as much effort as I usually do, but the weekly W.O.W meetings helped to keep me focused and not short change myself. The support from the other women is empowering, comforting, and sometimes all you need to get through the day. W.O.W taught me how to remain healthy emotionally, mentally, and even physically with Zumba and line dancing classes! W.O.W even offered me an outlet to share my gift of writing with others. I was even more affirmed in my giftedness upon hearing how much the other W.O.W women related to my work.
Do I, Do I Not Need Counseling? That is the Question!

by Lynne M. Williams, Advisor

In the many years that I have worked at Prince George’s Community College as a Psychology Adjunct Faculty member and as an Advisor, it has amazed me how few students take advantage of the various counseling and advising services that the college offers. The dictionary defines ‘counsel’: “to give someone advice and help with problems; to give someone advice and information to help a person through a particular situation.” Advice on the other hand refers to: “providing information or opinion about what a person could do in a situation; providing ideas, options on how to handle a particular situation.”

There are many questions that can be asked about why problems seem to escalate in a person’s life as well as how well a person handles those problems. There are also many questions to be asked as to how problems even develop or why they develop. However… this article is not to address those questions (although they are good questions for anyone to ask themselves!).

Simply put, receiving counseling and advising on a regular basis is necessary for everyone. Everyone should want information that will help them know themselves better, know what direction they should and should not go, and equip them to handle situations better in the future. If you experienced a sudden tragic event in your life, how would you know the best way to cope or eliminate stress, anxiety, etc.? If you do not know, PGCC has Counseling Services that do know (Bladen Hall, Room 122).

Are you clear about 4-year college options, career choices, or various opportunities that are available to you after you leave PGCC? Well, Career Services and Vocational Support Services definitely know (Marlboro Hall, Room 2102).

If you reach a crossroads in your degree plan, your courses, or even all the particulars about registering, dropping/adding classes, deadlines, policies and procedures, etc., do you have all the answers? All PGCC students are required to complete an EduPlan. This is mandated by the college. Have you completed one? Has an advisor looked it over to make sure it is workable, reasonable and one that you can actually reach successfully? Advising and Transfer Services does have the answers to all of these questions.

I welcome you, encourage you, and highly advise you to see me on a regular basis — not just when you want to register for classes. This is my advice to you. If you want to advance, achieve and accomplish your personal, academic and career goals, allow an advisor to assist you with planning your courses (an EduPlan) and utilize the resources that are easily accessible and available to you. This is wisdom speaking to you Women of Wisdom!

Advice for Advancing Personally:
Make the decision today to take advantage of the academic advising that is available to you today!
Make your day a day of accomplishments… on purpose.
If you are a W.O.W participant, remember to contact me for advising including for assistance creating your EduPlan. I am located in Bladen Hall, Room 124. I can be reached at willialx@pgcc.edu or 301-322-0900 ext. 9033.

These are only three of the many support services that PGCC provides for its students.

Now I’ll ask the question again: “Do You or Do You Not Need Counseling?”

W.O.W Makes a Difference!

by Amy Duley

Having grown up solely with strong, rugged male mentors, I thought that nothing would change when I came to Prince George’s Community College. Instead, I found two amazing women who are endlessly dedicated to helping their students succeed in school and in life. Professor Hanson and Ms. Harver have both been invaluable mentors to me who I would not have found if not for Women of Wisdom. I met Professor Hanson after applying for the Psychology, Sociology, and Education Collegian Center (something I would not have done had Ms. Harver not pushed me to become more involved in campus activities). Through the recent sickness and passing of my uncle, in addition to other personal trials, her door has always been open and she is always willing to listen, offer advice, and give her input on whatever new ideas I may bring to her. However, my discovery of brilliant peers and role models did not end there.

As I began to attend the Women of Wisdom meetings regularly, I met more and more exceptional women that exemplify the passion and drive that all of the program’s participants strive to achieve. W.O.W is a community of diverse ladies with various backgrounds and interests. More importantly, these women welcome you openly without judgment and create a place for you to discuss anything and everything without discrimination. I believe this is due to the exemplary leadership the program has had and the fact that Ms. Harver’s door is always open and ready for conversation! From my own struggle to be more social to dealing with the stresses of my classes, she is always unrelenting in stirring up a discussion. If you are looking for a powerful, inspiring, and dedicated woman to help you grow and expand your confidence and opportunities, that is Ms. Harver.

Over the Spring 2014 semester, I have been preparing to transfer to University of Maryland, College Park to major in Animal Biotechnology. Ms. Harver has been extremely helpful, especially in helping me network, to pursue my dream of working for the United States Department of Agriculture. She has also been exceedingly helpful in keeping me motivated as I begin my transition from community college to university. So far it has been taxing to say the least, but it is comforting knowing that there is always someone an e-mail away that will open your eyes to the positives of your situation, whatever it may be.

Be grateful that you have someone like her just a few doors down from you on campus to keep you on track and committed to your development. I feel distressed that I am leaving if only because I won’t get to see these ladies every week, but I know that they will continue to support me and my endeavors wherever they take me. While they’re not soiled farmers or welders who toughened me up by teaching me to drive tractors or fix motorcycles, these graceful, sophisticated women are just as strong and just as remarkable as my granddad or my uncle, and taught me to be unyielding in the face of adversity while maintaining a professional and poised demeanor. I leave you with the words of a wise woman that have encouraged me to tirelessly improve my own abilities and attitude: Expand it. Break it.
If you have success stories about how the Women of Wisdom program has made a difference in your life and helps you to envision success, take the journey, and complete your degree, please send your e-mail to wow@pgcc.edu.

Ms. Harver and the W.O.W sessions have helped me take a look at what was holding my life up and make and execute plans that would get me where I wanted to be.

I hope you can learn from my lesson. I have learned just because you sweep things—shortcomings under the rug or out of sight—doesn’t mean they are not there. Leaving things untreated could hinder your success and could have hindered mine. However, W.O.W was like a dental team who noticed a soft spot containing pain and decay from a past meal. Since this area had not been completely cleaned previously, it needed to have old debris removed so that truth, strength, and power could fill the space instead.

W.O.W offers a place where I didn’t just get treated like a number, but as an individual person who needed personalized care. You can also receive this care because we all need personalized care. You can run but you can’t hide from yourself so you might as well be honest with who you truly are. Through pain and the rough parts of life there is a place to gain courage, strength and truth, understanding and contentment in ways that we never had before. W.O.W is a program that offers a place for you.

In June 2006, I graduated high school as an honor roll student and three months later life happened. While attending Sacramento University, the passing of my grandmother hit me hard and mental and emotional turmoil came at me like I had never experienced before. Especially being a happy go lucky teenager, I knew absolutely nothing about the discomfort that came over my life nor even how to begin to handle it. As tensions grew higher with no consolation in sight, my home life became a battlefield of anger, confusion and frustration. My mother and I began to verbally fight, unable to get through the fog and heavy showers of grief. My once steady life appeared to take this seemingly wrong turn and suddenly drive down through rocky terrains. Out of my lack of coping skills and my desperate attempt to solve the inner dispute while quieting the storm, I willingly moved out when it was suggested to me during a heated argument.

Now, I was working and living on my own and still taking classes at a nearby junior college, but I repeatedly withdrew from classes due to my immense sadness over many semesters. I underachieved like I had never in my life and was literally just going through the motions. Finally, I’d had enough and wanted out of the cycle of disorder.

So, I made up my mind to come to Maryland for a new environment hoping to jolt my life into the correct gear after stalling out over and over. I knew I wanted to complete what I had started by making this move. Truthfully, I don’t remember how I ended up in Ms. Harver’s office, but I do remember how I felt when I left. I thought this would be one of those meetings when they ask you a bunch of questions that they ask every single last candidate for entry into a program as if we were pieces of equipment on a factory conveyor belt, but I was wrong.

Caught completely off guard, I felt like I was having a conversation with a close friend that I hadn’t seen in some time. Instantaneously, Ms. Harver knew I was crying behind my smile and started working on what was holding me back from completing my degree. We uncovered many road blocks from the past and some even that may come in the future. Right away we got to work on what was troubling me and how to solve the problems that were barriers to my ability to achieve success.

While talking with Ms. Harver about one of the issues during this intake and life, academic and career coaching meeting, I realized that I wanted to become a yoga instructor. This would allow me to help those, who like myself, think they know all the answers and choose to try and speed through life, to slow down and pause to appreciate life as it is in the present moment.

I know that even having the opportunity to express things we have tucked away is a starting point to growth. Moving forward towards the future and leaving the past in the past can be done. So, let’s not run away from tough issues because it’s not going to fix itself. Surely, the Women of Wisdom (W.O.W) support system, including the staff and the participants, is amazing. We are truly a sisterhood and we are here for one another. W.O.W is the glue that holds me accountable to myself, the smile in the hallway after financial aid hasn’t gone through yet, or even the encouragement to keep trying after a low grade. W.O.W makes it all worth it, as if we are in this together.
### W.O.W Fall 2014 Schedule

**Starting the Semester Off Right**
Identify strategies that will help you approach the semester in an efficient and organized manner.

**Marlboro Hall, Room 2090**
Wednesday, September 3
12–1 p.m.

**W.O.W Welcome**
Spend time with other female students, socialize and learn how to develop healthy relationships with women and enjoy a light lunch.

**Largo Student Center, Community Rooms A and B**
Monday, September 8
11 a.m.–1 p.m.

**Increasing Your Self Esteem and Leveraging Your Strength**
Learn how to increase your self-awareness, and achieve your intended outcomes and the success you have envisioned. Learn how to leverage your strengths as a student and leader.

**Bladen Hall, Room 133**
Monday, September 15
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Thursday, September 18
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Accokeek Hall, Room 221
Thursday, September 18
5–6:30 p.m.

**Constitution Day Trip to Mount Vernon**
Cost $5-10/per person.
Contact Owl Success Track at Dreherjk@pgcc.edu.
Alexandria, VA
Friday, September 19

**Developing Effective Study Skills**
Come sharpen your study skills, strengthen good work habits, and maximize your educational experience.

**Marlboro Hall, Room 2090**
Monday, September 22
11 a.m.–12 p.m.
Accokeek Hall, Room 221
Thursday, September 25
11 a.m.–12 p.m.
TBD
Thursday, September 25
5–6:30 p.m.

**Create Your Vision Board**
Learn how to create your vision board and utilize S.M.A.R.T goals to envision success.

**Largo Student Center, Community Rooms A, B, or C**
Monday, September 29
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 2
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 5–6:30 p.m.

**Finding Work Life Balance**
Come learn how you can find work life balance and envision the success you have planned. At times, juggling what you have to do can be a struggle that impedes your success, but it does not have to be a struggle.

**Bladen Hall, Room 133**
Monday, October 6
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 9
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Accokeek Hall, Room 221
Thursday, October 9
5–6:30 p.m.

**Resume Writing**
Learn how to identify basic elements of a chronological, functional and a targeted resume to determine which one will best suit your individual needs.

**Marlboro Hall, Room 2102**
Monday, October 13
11 a.m.–12 p.m.
Bladen Hall, Room 133
Thursday, October 16
11 a.m.–12 p.m.
Marlboro Hall, Room 2102
Thursday, October 16
5–6 p.m.

**Career Portfolio**
Learn how to create your portfolio.

**Bladen Hall, Room 133**
Monday, October 20
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 23
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
TBD
Thursday, October 23
5–6:30 p.m.

**Mock Interviews**
Practice your interview skills and learn what to do and what not to do before, during and after an interview experience.

**Accokeek Hall, Room 221**
Monday, October 27
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Accokeek Hall, Room 221
Thursday, October 30
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 5–6:30 p.m.

**Power Series: The Power of Negotiating**
Learn how negotiating can help you build life-long economic security of women.

**Bladen Hall, Room 13**
Monday, November 3
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Accokeek Hall, Room 221
Thursday, November 6
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 5–6:30 p.m.

**Global Café**
Visit a marketplace atmosphere teaching and celebrating the cultures of our students, faculty, and staff.

**Largo Student Center, Community Room A, B, or C**
Monday, November 10
11 a.m.–1 p.m.

**Power Series: The Power of Networking**
Learn how to network and how it can help you to fulfill your career and academic goals.

**Accokeek Hall, Room 221**
Thursday, November 20
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 5–6:30 p.m.

**Intercultural Communication**
Explore diverse cultures focusing on differences among sexes and how to recognize cultural differences, and how to bridge the cultural communication gap. Also how to be assertive will be discussed.

**Largo Student Center, Community Room A, B, or C**
Monday, November 17
12–12:50 p.m.
Thursday, November 13
11–11:50 a.m. and 5–5:50 p.m.
Monday, November 17
12–12:50 p.m.

**Stone Soup Celebration**
Enjoy our end of the year social and celebrate mentoring relationships. Share how your experience as a mentee supported your academic, personal and professional growth.

**Largo Student Center, Conference Room 2**
Monday, December 1
11 a.m.–12 p.m.
Thursday, December 4
11 a.m.–12 p.m. and 5–6 p.m.

**Fitness Fun**
Join us for Fitness Fun, embrace personal wellness, de-stress and gain confidence through movement.

**Largo Student Center, Community Rooms A and B**
Thursday, November 20
11 a.m.–1 p.m.

*Limited seating. Pre-registration required.*