Your First Year at MICA
A SURVIVAL GUIDE
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A Publication of MICA Student Affairs & Academic Advising
Welcome to your first year at MICA! You’ve just begun a new phase in your life—a time filled with new ideas, expectations, commitments, and experiences. The transition to college life is exciting and, at times, challenging. Maybe you’ve seen friends or siblings go through this experience—now it’s your turn. We’ve prepared this booklet to share some insights and advice that have been valuable for the MICA students who came before you.

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Congratulations and welcome to MICA!

You are here having distinguished yourself as exceptional, with the potential to succeed in a rigorous studio and academic environment. The first-year program builds the foundation for your success at MICA and beyond. You will be immersed for the next four years in making and thinking, which are never separated at MICA.

An important component of your freshman year is making the transition to college and independence. Self-management skills, like establishing disciplined work habits and managing your time so that project deadlines for both studio and academic classes aren’t overwhelming, as well as developing holistic health behaviors, like stress management, eating well, and getting enough sleep, will be emphasized throughout the year.

Your first year facilitates connections with all of MICA’s diverse resources.

Life beyond the classroom is an integral part of a MICA education. Community, both within MICA and beyond, is important. Making friends, being social, and allowing yourself access to as many enriching experiences as possible on campus and in the culturally exciting and diverse communities of Baltimore—and the nearby urban centers of Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and New York City—are all important to your success and education at college.

We are glad you’ve chosen MICA, and the Foundation faculty, staff, and advising team are all available to help you thrive during a year that will be exciting and demanding. We hope you’ll take full advantage of the resources available to you at MICA.

From Foundation: Dennis Farber and Fletcher Mackey
Adjusting To College Life

Congratulations—you’ve earned your place as a student at one of the nation’s top art colleges! The next few years will be an exciting and important time in your life and will lay the groundwork for your future.

But no matter how excited you are to be here, leaving family and friends to attend college can be a challenge. Adjusting to life on campus—a new city, roommates, responsibilities, challenging coursework, new routines—is easier for some and harder for others. It can take a fair amount of time and patience. Here’s some of what you can expect and some proven advice for making it through—and maybe even learning to enjoy—this transition time:

A little homesickness is normal, but you can’t let it dampen your spirit. Instead of thinking about what you’re missing, focus on what you are gaining and all the new experiences you’ll be able to share with friends and family. Homesickness doesn’t mean you’re weak, only that you have experienced love and security in your home life—and that’s a good thing!

You are not alone. Every new student at every college everywhere is going through this same thing. Don’t be afraid to talk about your feelings. If you’re having trouble coping, talk to a friend, roommate, RA, a teacher, or a staff member.

Your friends and family are not gone from your life. You’re never more than a call or click away, so communicate (in moderation) with folks at home. Share your feelings with them, but remember that your parents are going through a transition of their own, and this time can be emotionally difficult for them, too. Sometimes, a visit home can help with homesickness, but don’t go home too often or you’ll have trouble integrating into the MICA community.

MICA is what you make of it. Keep in touch with home, but move on with your new life, too. Make an effort to explore your new environment—the more you learn, the better stories you’ll have to tell when you call home. Get involved. Join a club or find a part-time job where you can meet new people.

It takes time to adjust to major life changes like this one. So don’t make any rash decisions right now. When you’re sad or overwhelmed, it’s easy to make big decisions that feel good in the moment, but are not the best thing for you. This is not the time to drop out, transfer to a different school, end a long-term relationship, or make any other life-changing decision. Wait until you are feeling better. It could take a semester or even longer before you stop feeling homesick. Students often find out how much of a “home” college is when they return from winter break. Hang in there! It will get better.
Most MICA students were very busy in high school, involved in various extracurricular activities, working hard on art, doing community service, playing an instrument. Entering MICA students are already extraordinarily accomplished men and women. You had great grades and a terrific portfolio, so you must have been great at time management in high school. But you’ll soon learn that there are some major differences between high school and college, and a whole new set of time and life management skills is required for success here.

There is no one here to tell you what to do and when to do it. In college, you have a tremendous amount of freedom. No one monitors your progress. No one checks to see if you are going to class, or if you’ve done your assignments. Right when you’re faced with a million fresh distractions, you’re expected to begin making your own decisions and motivating yourself to keep focused on your work and activities. In the coming months, you’ll begin to see the world through your own eyes and develop your own opinions, values, and work habits.

Success at MICA requires a lot of effort. Academic and studio classes at MICA are very rigorous, and the workload in the foundation year can be a surprise for even the most hardworking student. If you give only the minimum effort, you’ll get low grades. Set time aside every day to work on assignments and projects.

You’re responsible for your own academic progress, so you’ll need to learn how to practice effective self-management for artists. Time management is important for all college students, but it’s particularly essential for student artists, whose classes require many hours in the studio, and for those with a job or many extracurricular activities.

**SURVIVAL TIP:** Make a connection with at least one faculty or staff member.
Time Management For Artists

There are some time management strategies that really work—and MICA students who practice good time management are those who enjoy both school and a less stressful, more pleasurable life.

**Don’t overextend yourself.** Take a hard look at all the things you want to do—are there enough hours in the day for it all? Whenever you feel you’re doing more than you can handle, don’t blame yourself—first consider what you might be able to change to make your life more manageable. It might just be a matter of taking a short break from an activity while you get used to a college-level work load.

**Plan ahead.** Take a look at all the things you have to do, consider ways you can get them done most efficiently, and then write out a plan. Revise your plan as needed, and check things off as you get them done. Long-term art assignments are intended to allow for periods of research, reflection, and revision, so start new assignments right away.

**Be organized.** Being organized is a tremendous time-saver. Use a notebook, calendar, online planner, or MICA’s “Red Book.” When you are organized, you know what you have to do, and you have all the information and materials you need. Go to class prepared to work. Don’t miss class time because your canvas isn’t primed!

**SURVIVAL TIP:** Take responsibility to ask important questions.

**Make efficient use of your time.** Make conscious choices about how to use your time. Look for ways to streamline and combine tasks. For example, bring work when you go to the laundry. Keeping up with multiple projects will be integral to your life now and as a practicing artist.

**Start now.** Spend some time in the first week of the semester to determine what time management strategies work best for you. Are you a night owl who works well in the late hours or an early riser who thinks while others sleep? Do you like crossing off lists or do lists stress you out? See what suits your style and begin using these strategies right away so you don’t fall behind.

**Ask for help.** If you are unsure about what time management strategies might work for you, ask your academic advisor for ideas, or visit the Learning Resource Center. Talk to other students about how they balance classwork, social life, and employment. They all understand how you’re feeling.
Staying Healthy

When setting goals for your time at MICA, don’t forget to think about your personal well-being—relaxation, exercise, fun. Laughing, enjoying life, and staying healthy should be priorities. Between assignments, critiques, and maintaining an active social life, many college students don’t think it’s important to take the time to focus on their personal health and wellness until an illness catches hold and stops them in their tracks. These are the same lessons you learned at home. The difference is that there’s nobody here to tell you to eat the right things or get to bed at a reasonable hour—it’s up to you to make the right choices.

**Eat right.** Good nutrition and healthy eating habits aren’t just for preventing a heart attack 30 years down the road—they can help you through stressful times now. Eating well will increase your physical, mental, and emotional stamina. Fueling yourself with nutrient-dense foods can boost your immune system, help you maintain a healthy weight, and help you feel better about yourself.

**Exercise.** Physical activity provides immediate stress relief as well as long-term stress management. Just 20–30 minutes of walking a day, for example, can give you more energy, help you put things in perspective, improve your sleep, sharpen your mental productivity, and boost your self-confidence. Our bodies are made to move, and everyone can find some type of activity that is enjoyable. Make it fun by doing it with friends.

**Get your beauty sleep. Consistent sleep is critical for a healthy life.** Different people need different amounts of sleep, but no matter who you are, if you don’t get enough sleep, everything from your immune system to your ability to learn and remember information will be negatively affected. Sleep is as important as nutrition and exercise when preparing for peak performance.

**Make friends. Have fun.** Human contact is also important in helping you perform your best. With friends to share your thoughts and feelings, you can lower your stress level. Allow yourself some time to relax!

**Utilize the Wellness Center.** The MICA Wellness Center houses both the Student Health Services and Student Counseling Offices. In addition, the MICA Fitness Center offers new, state-of-the-art exercise equipment, as well as a bike share program. Take advantage of the opportunities to keep yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally sound.
Words Of Wisdom: Alcohol And Drug Use

BY PATRICIA FARRELL-MCLAUGHLIN, MSW, LCSW-C, DIRECTOR, MICA COUNSELING CENTER

As you enter MICA, you are on the cusp of enormous change—change in your environment, your responsibilities, and your physical and brain development. The brain is particularly involved in behaviors that keep us alive. Your brain assesses your body’s needs and produces behavior to satisfy those needs. For example, you’re hungry and go on the hunt for food. When you find food, you eat it, and you feel happy because the neural “reward pathway” in your brain has been activated. Behavior that activates the “reward pathway” is repeated (it’s about the dopamine—the pleasure-producing neurochemical in our brains). That repetition of stimulation of the “reward pathway” promotes learning by the frontal lobes of the brain, and the brain changes. We want to experience the pleasurable feeling again, so we repeat the behaviors that produce it.

But the brain also learns from behaviors that do not help us survive the rigors of life! The brain’s “reward pathway” is even more easily activated by behaviors such as drug and alcohol use/abuse that can do permanent damage to the neural circuits in the brain. This damage leads to problems with academics, with friends and lovers, with family, and with work, and it may ultimately lead to addiction.

And the most vulnerable time for the brain is when it’s completing the development of communication connections between neurons called myelinization, which happens in human beings between the ages of 18 and 21.

So, what behaviors have a distinct negative effect on brain development? Abusing alcohol and illegal and prescribed drugs is the quickest way to adversely affect short- and long-term brain development and function. Alcohol and drugs disrupt the normal formation of myelin in the brain and negatively affect an individual’s ability to think, regulate emotions, and care for self and others. Perhaps most important to MICAns is that drug and alcohol abuse will interfere with your ability to think and work creatively and produce original art.

The truth is that young adults are wildly willing to take risks with their physical, cognitive, and mental health. We all think that it’s “the other person” who will end up with a problem. For some people (and there’s no way to tell ahead of time who will be part of “some”), their brains will quickly learn that any amount of alcohol or drugs will stimulate the “reward pathway” in their brains in a way that will leave them addicted and their brains damaged.

Addiction is a brain disease. It causes a psychological (and physical) craving for the substance and causes the person experiencing that craving extreme stress until the craving is satisfied.

Research for this article was taken from a paper presentation at Towson University (Summer 2010) by Linda K. Gorman, PhD, titled “The Effects of Drugs & Alcohol on Your Brain: How to Talk to College Students”
Do we have to abstain from all drugs and alcohol? Well, that’s a decision that each of us has to make for ourselves. The old saying “moderation in all things” makes a lot of sense when you think of the physical and cognitive consequences of abusing any substance—whether it’s legal or not.

If you or anyone you know is struggling with abuse or addiction to alcohol or drugs, please reach out for help. MICA asks all of us—students, faculty, and staff—to be part of a safety net to help any student experiencing addiction, depression, or any physical or mental health concern.

**Remember: if you ever have concerns for your own or someone else’s safety, even in the middle of the night, please call Campus Safety’s 24/7 emergency number—443-423-3333—and request the help of the trained first responders on their staff.**
Managing Your Money

College life is full of opportunities to spend. If you don’t manage your spending, you could wind up with mounds of insurmountable debt, which can lead to unwanted stress.

**First, make a budget.** A budget gives you control over your money and helps you limit spending.

- Get started by listing all your sources of income—job, student loans, savings, and parental support. How much do you have available to spend?
- Then make a list of what you think you’ll need to spend in each category for a month—books and art supplies, meals not covered by a meal plan, entertainment, personal care items, telephone, car expenses, and clothes.
- Now, assess total income and expenses for the year. If expenses are higher than your income, you’ll need to find a way to increase the income (perhaps by taking on a part-time job, doing freelance work), or you’ll need to reduce spending.

And remember, a budget needs to be flexible. You’ll probably revise it after the first month or two, and you should revisit it as things change.

**SURVIVAL TIP:** Get involved at MICA.

**Don’t be seduced by credit cards.** Credit card companies aggressively target college students, and credit cards can be easy to mismanage. It can be useful to have a credit card for emergencies and for building a credit history. But for some students, access to credit is an invitation to overspend. If you decide to get a credit card, be sure you understand how credit works. Don’t borrow more than you can pay back. You should never charge more than the amount you can easily afford to pay each month. If you want to be safe, you should use a debit card for everyday expenses and reserve the credit card for emergencies. Debit cards give you all the convenience you need, but are limited to the amount of money in your bank account.

**Maintain a local bank account.** It’s a good idea to open a checking account in Baltimore. Most banks offer free or low-fee checking for students and having a local bank gives you fee-free access to convenient ATM locations. You should know how to balance a checkbook. It is an uninteresting job, but it is cheaper than bouncing checks!

**Control your spending.** Try to keep outside spending and campus spending (Flex) under control by looking for low-cost entertainment on campus. MICA offers lots of free and inexpensive entertainment options. In addition, joining clubs and organizations gives you something to do and someone to do it with, and the expenses are far less than a weekend shopping spree at the mall.
In coming to MICA, you decided to study and live in a community of artists and designers. For some of you, this may be your first opportunity to thrive among like-minded souls; for others, this is the next step in a life that has always been surrounded with art and artmaking. You may experience a moment when you look around, wonder how you measure up, and ask if you have what it takes to be an artist. And because the work you do is so important, so connected to your sense of who you are, there’s a lot more than a grade point average riding on the answer to that question.

You already passed the test. Remember: you were accepted to MICA after a thorough review of your academic record and portfolio. You have the skills, abilities, and promise to flourish in this environment, and MICA offers services to help you achieve that promise. Take advantage of those resources when you need them.

You aren’t learning if you don’t risk making mistakes. The occasional failure or disappointment is something you should expect when you’re pushing yourself to do your best work. You only learn when you venture beyond the things you already know how to do.

Success means different things to different people. Part of your development as a student, artist, and member of the MICA community will be deciding for yourself your own definition of success and recognizing when you have achieved it.

Every art student questions the meaning of it all. Your identity as an artist will likely evolve during the course of your studies here. You won’t be the same person when you graduate as you were when you arrived. As you change, you may question the role that art—and specifically your art—plays in your life, in society, and in a world where the role of artists is more prominent than ever. Maybe you’ll doubt your commitment to art. Don’t worry; most artists do. Learn to be comfortable with the ebb and flow of your creativity and inspiration. Talk about this with your friends, classmates, and faculty—a lively discussion is sure to develop.
What you’re learning now will be applied to your future professional life. It may be easy to identify the new things that you’re learning in class this year, such as perspective drawing or Photoshop. MICA thinks it’s just as important for you to develop other skills related to professional development. As the year progresses, try to spot other areas in which you’ve gained experience: self-management (you can do laundry while finishing homework and returning a call home!), collaboration and teamwork (you can work together with classmates on an assignment or participate in a community project!), communication skills (you can contribute to a critique or analyze a text in class!), information literacy (you can do research for a paper!), and self-knowledge (you’re learning how best to be at MICA!). This part of your education will be useful to you both now and in the future.

Enjoy your time here! While you may be thinking eagerly of your future and planning where your education might take you, don’t forget to live in the present. Savor this period in time. This is your college experience. This is your life—not just preparation for your future.
Learning To Be An Art Student

This first year lays the foundation for your career at MICA. It's designed to introduce you to new ideas, challenge some familiar ideas and assumptions, and teach you to take on new responsibilities. Your academic success depends on developing self-awareness, the ability to manage independently your academic and personal life, and an understanding of what MICA expects from you. In your classes, you'll need to learn how to participate in discussions, work with classmates, and engage faculty in conversation. One of the smartest moves any student can make is acknowledging areas in which assistance—academic or personal—would be beneficial, and MICA faculty and staff can help you to connect with the resources you may need.

We want to hear what you have to say. Communication will be an important aspect of your time at MICA. Communicating with faculty, your fellow student artists, your residence advisor, and your academic advisor will bring about significant exchanges of ideas and information. But once again, it's up to you to take the initiative. Ask questions, share concerns, search for answers; all of us on campus want to participate in this conversation with you.

We expect you to be a citizen of our community of artists. Because you are a member of our student body, MICA has expectations of you, academically and personally. Understanding those expectations will help you to meet them and help with your transition into our community. MICA's academic policies can be found in the Academic Bulletin, and student life policies are detailed in MICA Inside/Out (the "Red Book"), both of which you received at orientation. Take some time to become familiar with these expectations, and ask campus staff and your instructors if you have questions about them. These are the published policies. But there are other expectations that aren't spelled out so clearly. These more subtle expectations are part of our "campus culture" or the "MICA way" of doing things, such as appropriate ways to contact a faculty member. The friendly, inviting campus community you experienced when you first visited depends on all members sharing values and practices that build this culture of civility. Whenever you're unsure of what's expected, ask. Learning what it means to be a "MICAn" will require some proactive effort on your part, but the effort will pay off in a more satisfying experience at MICA.
Your instructors are excited to work with you. MICA’s faculty are among the best in the nation. The opportunity to learn from and work with this distinguished group of artists and scholars is likely one of the main reasons you chose to come to MICA in the first place. The relationships you develop with your instructors will be one of the most important and beneficial components of your time here. Your instructors can be great resources, gifted mentors, and strong allies in your growth as an artist, and they are not simply available to help you—they’re eager to do so. Many of the reasons that brought you to MICA are similar to the ones that brought your instructors here. The chance to work in a community of gifted student-artists is exciting for the faculty, and they are deeply interested in working with you. Be sure to engage your instructors both in and out of the classroom. They are expecting you to be an active participant in your education, and, as such, they assume you will want to discuss and debate with them.

Connecting with faculty members is an important part of your education. Getting to know your instructors better strengthens the working relationship you have with them. They aren’t your friends or your peers, but they are your mentors and can be some of the greatest advocates of your work both here at MICA and after you graduate. Don’t underestimate the value of a simple chat after class or time spent talking over coffee. Even the simplest of connections helps your instructor get to know you better (and vice versa), and that knowledge can speak volumes when it comes to guiding you to creating better work. Also, as you move toward graduation, you will find yourself working closely with one or more instructors who really know you (and your work) and are able to mentor you through the culmination of your education at MICA. Learning which instructors with whom you have a “good fit” begins your very first day. Remember that each and every class is an opportunity, and each and every instructor can turn out to be your greatest ally.

Attendance and participation count. Grades can be a source of stress. Happily, you have control over your grades and can set yourself up for success by doing two very simple things. These two most important things you can do for yourself may sound obvious, but students whose grades suffer have failed to do them: (1) go to every class and (2) turn in all assignments on time. MICA’s relaxed environment may suggest to new students that it’s okay to miss classes or ignore deadlines. However, since classes meet only once a week at MICA, missing even one class is equal to missing an entire week of class. Make sure you understand your instructors’ absence and lateness policies and how these will affect your grades. Your class attendance is not only essential for you, but for your fellow students as well—because everyone is counting on your participation. If you need to miss a class due to illness or other personal issues, contact your instructor beforehand. A simple email sent before the class you will miss lets your instructor know what’s going on and allows her or him to let you know what you need to do. If you just don’t show up, your instructor is left to question your commitment to the course. And it can set you behind. Showing up late for
class and missing deadlines can produce the same set of issues. Remember that your instructors have many students and multiple classes to teach, and so it isn’t feasible for them to backtrack and re-teach a lesson when a student falls behind. You are responsible for your own success. You need to take charge of your own coursework and not expect the instructor to do it for you.

The critique. *Thoughts from Foundation chair Fletcher Mackey*

Now that you have arrived at the art academy, all of you will have a chance to experience one of the traditional practices in discussing artwork, “the critique.” I suppose that many of you have done so already as this is a common ritual in the creative community and an important part of your artmaking. You, the individual maker of things referred to as “art,” present it to a community of others (the faculty and your peers in most cases), and they respond by giving you an assessment through conversing. The critique here is meant to be a constructive method. It is generally done while focusing on work done through a given assignment or through independent study. This is an opportunity for you to expand beyond the self-evaluations and reflections that you no doubt have done many times through the process of making and completing your work. This is vital to your growth as an artist. Is it scary to be in front of a group of others, alone with your work, which in all reality is an extension of yourself? Of course it can be. It can also be a moment where serendipity and making connections with new ideas takes place. We all learn from each other, and we are often surprised to know how others see things that we may or may not see. It is a chance to hear about other artists and individuals who may have traversed down a similar road that you are on. The environment of the critique is a sensitive space where ideas and feelings are moving about, and, at times, you will hear comments and suggestions that may not seem tailored to you or your expectations. Take it all in perspective. The dynamics of dialectical learning are often in play in many of your courses. You are in a space where a diverse group of artists from around the globe is meeting to learn and offer its views and sometimes opinions. In time, through your effort and patience, you can benefit from understanding the difference between ideas that are most useful for you and those that aren’t. Many instructors have unique styles that they bring to building a conversation about students’ work. All bring an intention of helping you develop and improve your creative genius. In the end, your time here will have afforded you an experience that gives you the best navigational skills for understanding your processes to make successful works of art.

SURVIVAL TIP:
Embrace your unique path at MICA.
The choice of a major is a major decision. In the spring, you will be faced with a big decision: formally declaring your major. You may already know your planned major, or the decision may seem daunting. MICA offers a range of opportunities and experiences in the foundation year to help you make or confirm this decision. Take advantage of all these resources:

• Your foundation curriculum, which includes a foundation studio elective, lets you sample different media and majors.
• Your academic advisor has lots of information that can help you assess what major might be right for you.
• Campus exhibitions show the work being done by students and faculty in all departments, and all departments sponsor programs open to all students.
• MICA’s Academic Bulletin outlines the programs for all majors and describes courses.
• Our friendly, informal atmosphere allows you to visit departments and talk with faculty and upperclass students.
• The Major Café program in the fall, designed for foundation students, will introduce you to different majors and the upperclass experience.
• The Joseph Meyerhoff Center for Career Development offers resources that can help you to understand career options in different majors.

Don’t worry that you might change your mind. Sometimes it takes additional experiences to know which major is the right fit for you. You can switch majors in your sophomore year, or sometimes even beyond, without setting back your graduation very much or at all.

SURVIVAL TIP: Laugh often and have fun.

Your parents will also be very interested in your choice of major. They may be concerned about your future career opportunities and worried about how you will support yourself. They may not even understand what a certain major is! Spend time learning about a major, and your options post-graduation, then talk with your parents about your choice. The more that you know and can communicate with them, the more secure they will be about your well-being.
While college is a time to develop your autonomy and independence, and to learn to solve your own problems, there are people here to help you if you get stuck: your academic advisor, your resident assistant, a trusted faculty/staff member. Most questions can be quickly answered and problems resolved if you go to the appropriate person or office. But it’s up to you to take the initiative and ask for the help you need. MICA provides a wide variety of services designed to help students get the most out of their college experience:

Academic Advising

I’m having a problem with one of my classes and don’t know how to talk with the instructor.

I have no idea how to choose my major!

Mentoring and advising happen in many areas at MICA—you’ll find help from faculty, staff, and fellow students. Additionally, all first-year students have assigned advisors. Your Elements of Visual Thinking instructor is your primary advisor; he or she is someone who sees you every week and can get to know you and your development throughout the year. You also have another advisor, the Foundation academic advisor, who is located in the Foundation office. This advisor can help you with issues beyond the scope of your faculty advisor and has strong connections to resources across campus that can help you. The Foundation academic advisor can also make changes to your schedule or help you to drop a class, if necessary. Midway through the spring semester of your first year, after you have declared your major, you will begin working with an upperclass academic advisor. Don’t be afraid to talk to your advisors; they are here to help you!

Learning Resource Center (LRC)

I’m having trouble managing my time, and I’ve been late turning in most of my assignments.

I have special learning needs and realize I do need some support.

The LRC offers services to all students who may be struggling with such challenges as note taking, study skills, reading comprehension, and time management through one-on-one academic counseling and workshops. Students can also use the LRC’s assistive technology programs, the Kurzweil 3000, which scans and reads texts aloud, and the Dragon Dictate, which aids in writing tasks. In addition, students with disabilities may wish to request special accommodations to assist them in realizing their full potential at MICA. If you have a disability of any kind, contact the LRC as soon as possible. The staff will guide you on obtaining the assistance you may need.
The Writing Studio

*My first paper was harder than I thought it would be. I want my grade to be better on the next one.*

*I want to apply for a show, and I need help writing my artist statement.*

When you have writing needs of any kind (papers, artist statements, resumes, applications, cover letters, and so forth), you are welcome in the Writing Studio. The studio is staffed by experienced tutors and is a place for writers of all levels to improve their compositional skills. The Writing Studio can assist in all phases of the writing process—brainstorming, organizing, revising, and editing. The studio maintains a computer lab to assist students with learning differences, and is equipped with specific software to aid dyslexic and auditory processors; it also has private rooms designated for language learning. These are equipped with computers and specialized software for English, French, Italian, and other languages so that students can practice reading, pronunciation, and comprehension in their target language.

Counseling Center

*I am feeling overwhelmed by college life. I really need someone to talk to.*

*My friends are telling me that they’re worried about my behavior.*

No matter how academically successful they are, most students will experience some stressful times while in college. MICA provides free, confidential counseling. If you have a personal problem or concern, please contact the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment. MICA’s Counseling Center offers the following services: individual, group, family, and couples counseling; stress reduction through meditation, guided imagery, exercise, and nutrition; and medication evaluations. MICA’s counselors are highly trained and experienced in working with students who may suffer from adjustment disorders, clinical depression, anxiety, eating disorders, bipolar disorders, or drug and alcohol problems, as well as providing crisis intervention for sexual assault, suicide, bereavement, and accidents. The Counseling Center is also able to provide students with a list of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers in private practice if a student would like to be referred off campus or requires more in-depth counseling. All information shared by the students at the MICA Counseling Center is treated confidentially, respectfully, and with concern for the student. The center provides an intake session for students to discuss the kind of service that best fits the needs of the student and is within the center’s scope of practice. Individual counseling sessions are limited to seven sessions per academic year.
Joseph Meyerhoff Center for Career Development

*My parents want me to start figuring out what I’m going to do after college.*

*I want to find a part-time job in Baltimore.*

Choosing a career and planning for career success can sometimes be confusing tasks for college students. If you need information about planning and preparing for a specific career, internship, or graduate school, please visit the Joseph Meyerhoff Center for Career Development. It will aid you in identifying your career direction through self-assessment, career exploration, decision making, and goal setting. The center has an online database with the most up-to-date listings of job opportunities for artists and designers. It has an extensive resource library of materials dedicated exclusively to the professional development of artists. Support resources are available through a series of workshops addressing the day-to-day management of careers in art and design. Diverse topics include writing a resume, the art of interviewing, and applying for grants and fellowships.

Diversity and Intercultural Development (D.I.D.)

*I want to meet others like me.*

*I don’t feel like my culture and my artwork are being understood.*

First-year experiences may be difficult, to say the least, but there may be additional issues or concerns because of the diversity you find in your new environment. MICA’s diversity may be broader than your high school and so you may feel disconnected, or perhaps you want to learn how to connect to those who are different from you. These are a few reasons to connect to the Office of Diversity and Intercultural Development. D.I.D. celebrates and creates programs designed to help first-year students get to know one another and find connections within and across multiple forms of diversity such as nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, and religion. D.I.D. offers first-year students the opportunity to examine issues of community and diversity in greater depth. There are specially designed mentoring programs for students of color and organizations that support the GLBT community and other cultural groups. Activities throughout the year include heritage month celebrations, cultural art exhibitions, diversity training, and events that facilitate unity and inclusion. Regardless of your race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or ability, you can get involved in helping us create programs that you like that celebrate your definition of who you are.
Student Affairs

_I’ve been sick for over a week, I am behind on my work, and I don’t think my instructor will understand._

_My grandmother died, and I had to leave town unexpectedly to attend the funeral._

The staff of the Office of Student Affairs can assist students with any ongoing problems that affect attendance and academic performance such as extended medical issues, death of a loved one, involvement in an accident, etc. The staff will provide consultation and directions regarding medical transport and/or temporary accommodations and faculty notifications for serious instances. Due to the high demand on the Counseling Center staff, the Student Affairs team is a good place to start when you feel the need for any type of counseling (personal, mental health, etc.) that is not an immediate threat. If you are unsure of what steps to take in a situation, Student Affairs staff can provide counsel. Assistance can also be provided in negotiations between students and faculty on situations that may lead to Assignment Extensions, Incomplete Contracts (appropriateness as determined by faculty), and/or Medical Withdrawals.

The Decker Library

_I’m not quite sure if what I’m doing would be considered plagiarism._

_Where can I find other scholarly resources for my academic papers?_

Plagiarism is broadly defined as claiming authorship or using someone else’s ideas or work without proper acknowledgment. Each discipline within the arts has specific and appropriate means for citing or acknowledging sources, as well as the ideas and material of others, that you utilize in your own work. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with such standards and carefully following their use in developing original work. The Decker Library can assist you in determining appropriate citation guidelines and strategies for your academic projects.

In addition, the Decker Library provides a wide range of services and facilities for research. These include interlibrary loan, course-related reserves, copy-print scan equipment, and computer workstations (iMacs and PCs). The entire library is wireless enabled. The upper level of the library features lounge seating, as well as several tables, while the lower level offers study stations and lounge seating, including the Laptop Lounge.