



### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- November AWEstar, Michelle Vidaurri
- Tutor's Corner, Taylor Skokan
- Teaching & Learning
- AWE Update

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Tea Time/ Relaxation Event hosted by Health Services, Tues. Nov 30<sup>th</sup> & Wed. Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, Manzanita Student Center, 10am—2pm.

The next AWE Steering Committee, Fri. December 17<sup>th</sup>, in the Cellar, 9-10:30.

# Academic Wellness Educators

## November AWEstar

Michelle Vidaurri our AWEstar for November is the Financial Aid Specialist & Veterans Certifying Official. She has been employed with Columbia College for almost 7 years and was hired permanently in 2005 after employment as a federal work study student and short term employee. Michelle continued her education and graduated from Columbia College in 2008 (with distinction) and now holds a B.A. in Organizational Management with a concentration in Accounting. Michelle formerly held position of Financial Aid Technician where she moved all student correspondence to the more efficient and cost effective electronic communication through the Datatel module and helped

to increase off campus financial aid presentation sites by 120%.

Michelle is currently the FIG Coordinator for Veterans Focus, and said, "the FIG allows



Michelle Vidaurri, FA Specialist

us to fill in the gaps beyond the standard Veterans Services on campus.

"My experience in coordinating FA outreach events has prepared me to now focus on Veterans in outreach events that will hopefully increase retention by building the com-

munity of veteran students on this campus", states Michelle. She also helps to support the Veteran's Club activities by co-advising with Erik Andral. The Veterans Club on campus mission is to mentor other veterans or perspective service people with reliable and useful advice. The Veteran's Club just celebrated the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Veterans Day Celebration.

Michelle says, "I am thankful with the new promotional position and the support of Marnie Shively to have the flexibility to participate in the College community and contribute to such a wonderful group such as AWE, it has truly been a wonderful professional opportunity for me."

## Tutor's Corner with Taylor Skokan

I have been a fulltime student at Columbia College for one year, though I've been taking classes on and off since my senior year of high school. I've been working at the Academic Achievement Center since the spring of 2010, tutoring a variety of subjects, including English, History, Mathematics, and Anatomy. I have been fortunate enough to have attended

the classes of some amazing professors, who have motivated me to greatly expand my areas of interest. I will soon have a degree in English; however, I still plan on attending Columbia College to obtain a Biology degree. After receiving my Biology degree, I hope to transfer to a U.C. in order to continue my education in the life sciences.

Perhaps, one of my greatest concerns, in regards to student learning, is a lack of awareness of the processes involved. Being a successful student is not only about comprehending coursework, but constantly striving to become a more efficient and advanced learner, and, equally as important, a critical thinker. From my experience, many students try to

## Tutor's Corner Continued



Taylor Skokan,  
AAC Tutor

memorize materials, without considering how to truly understand the material and apply it, ignoring one of the surest ways to facilitate long-term memory formation. As a tutor, my hope is to help tutees learn how best they can learn, helping them to fully comprehend their studies. By harnessing this power, the need for shallow and short-term memorization is minimized.

Faced with changing times, the future holds fewer promises for those who lack the ability to apply subject matter to unforeseen circumstances; this is where promoting critical and divergent thinking becomes a necessity. As a student, I strongly encourage faculty to promote an understanding of learning preferences and varying study habits. In doing so, thus abandoning the ancient construct of education as a static

process, every student can achieve their full potential. To further promote critical thinking and understanding, I strongly recommend instructors advocate student discussion at every available opportunity; after all, it is by these means that the battle is often won or lost, a recognition of comprehension—or a lack thereof—can take place.

*The time to relax  
is when you  
don't have the  
time  
for it.*

*-- Unknown*

## Teaching & Learning

This time of the year can be stressful for both students and the college community in general. Students are coming to college with greater social and physical needs. Demands, with the holidays upon us, final papers and exams, can significantly increase students' level of anxiety.

**Health services will be hosting a Tea Time/ Relaxation Event , Tues. Nov 30<sup>th</sup> & Wed. Dec 1st in the Manzanita Student Center, 10am-2pm.**

Encourage students to attend and find out what they can do to help manage

stress and successfully complete their semester. Sit for tea, get a neck and shoulder massage, and listen to relaxation media!



One of several small AWE discussion groups.

## AWE Update!

This month the AWE Steering Committee met and discussed some new ideas and brainstormed resources that would be needed to make the ideas happen.

The AWE Committee is also reviewing a "Measures

of Success" form for FIG leaders. This form will help to evaluate outcomes of goals of achievement and recommendations to help increase success within the FIGs.

The AWE Steering Committee meetings are typi-

cally held on the second Friday of every month from 9-10:30 in the Cellar Restaurant. Please contact Adrienne or Alicia if you are interested in finding out more about AWE and how you can get involved. <http://awe.comm.gocolumbia.edu/>