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MILLENNIUM CITY UNIVERSITY



A Hero Plus Adventure for **CHAMPIONS**

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SPECIAL THANKS:

To the posters on the *Champions Online* message board who inspired me to write this by asking a bunch of questions I didn't yet have the answers to. ;)

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LOCATION AND LAYOUT



Ah, the ivory-covered halls of academe — where professors teach, students learn... and supervillains attack! Few places make better back-grounds for superheroic adventure than universities, with their laboratories, cutting-edge research, libraries filled with rare manuscripts, and dozens of other sources of origin stories and general trouble. And in the Champions Universe, no college fits that description better than the young but already hallowed halls of Millennium City University.

Millennium City University is a *Champions* mini-setting. Although it describes a location in the Champions Universe, you can easily put it into other settings, or adapt bits and pieces of it to your own fictional university.

Straddling the boundary between the Theater District and Northside, Millennium City University is a large, elegantly-designed campus. Unlike so many universities, which were built in the years before cars were common (or even existed) and therefore have poor traffic patterns and a dearth of reasonable parking, MCU was planned and built with the automobile and the needs of the modern student in mind.

The campus consists of four concentric “rings,” plus outlying related facili-

ties and support buildings: the Central Quadrangle; the Inner Ring; the loop road; and the Outer Ring.

THE CENTRAL QUADRANGLE

The Central Quadrangle, usually referred to simply as “the Quad,” is the heart of campus and the scene of a lot of the casual student social life. It consists of two large, rectangular, grassy areas split by a walking path, with a fountain and statue of the deceased superhero Vanguard in the very center. (To the extent students want to refer to the two parts of the Quad separately, they call them “East Quad” and “West Quad.”) Campus legend claims that if a virgin walks in front of the statue, Vanguard will wink.

The Quad is elegantly laid out and landscaped, with plenty of tree-shaded areas to break up the monotony of open grass. There are also plenty of benches. On all but the coldest days of the year, you’ll find plenty of students here, sitting on the benches (or grass) to do homework, talk, or just watch the passing parade (a practice known as “scoping,” particularly when it refers to checking out members of the opposite gender). Students interested in more active recreation use the Quad to play frisbee or hacky-sack.

THE INNER RING

The next “layer” of the campus is the Inner Ring — the buildings surrounding the Quad. It includes many of the most important or frequently-visited buildings on campus, such as the ones described below. None of these buildings is taller than four stories so the Quad can receive plenty of sunlight; many of them have basements, and sometimes even sub-basements.

ABERNATHY INTERFAITH CHAPEL

The builders of MCU recognized the importance of religion in both civic and student life and made sure to include a venue for it on campus. The Abernathy Interfaith Chapel is designed to offer

MCU VITAL STATISTICS

Student Population: 22,000 undergraduate; 5,000 post-graduate (not including Law or Medical students)

Student Body Breakdown:

53% female, 47% male

57% white, 26% black, 10% Asian, 5% Hispanic, 2% other

Curriculum: MCU offers nearly 100 possible majors, ranging from traditional liberal arts subjects like History, English, and Anthropology to more “vocational” subjects such as Journalism and Accounting. MCU is regarded as strongest in the subjects of electronic engineering, computer science, superhuman studies, sociology, psychology, and women’s studies; its law, engineering, and medical schools also consistently earn high rankings.

Mascot: The Vanguard (named in tribute to the fallen superhero of the Battle of Detroit, though “the Vanguard” is used in a more abstract sense; the mascot who appears on school logos and in costume at sports events is dressed more or less like an ancient Greek soldier).

Colors: Red and Gold (the red is a distinctive shade now known as “MCU red” in some circles)

facilities and support services for all religious groups on campus, though the vast majority of the groups that use it, and of the services held, are Christian. The building also includes offices for several campus-based charitable and service organizations, not all of them specifically religious in nature. The Rev. Jacob Wilamot, a minister in his late fifties who nevertheless retains a sort of youthful joy about life and is popular with the students, runs the Chapel.

ADMINISTRATION BUILDINGS

The primary administrative offices for MCU, including the offices of President Sanford and other high-ranking campus officials, are located in two Inner Ring buildings. Technically the buildings have names — the Crawford Administrative Building and the Mecosta Administrative Building — but faculty and students alike almost always refer to them as “Admin 1” and “Admin 2.” Admin 1 is regarded as the better-quality, more prestigious of the two, though in terms of interior layout and basic decor they’re practically identical.

THE ENGLISH BUILDING

MCU’s literary scholars and critics occupy this building. Classes in literature, writing, and related subjects take place here. The department also offers

ABOUT ...

HERO PLUS ADVENTURES

Millennium City University is one of Hero Games’s Hero Plus Adventures, a series of short, no-frills, inexpensive adventures (or, more accurately in this case, mini-settings) in PDF format. Hero Plus Adventures are designed to provide roughly one game session’s worth of entertainment, though they include suggestions on how to lengthen or expand the scenario if you want to. They’re written with simplicity and ease of use in mind so you can run them with a minimum of preparation.

PRINTING

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more unusual fare, including screenwriting courses, a small drama division, and a collection of eclectic offerings lumped together under the heading “popular culture studies.”

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES BUILDING

While MCU isn't well-known for the quality or breadth of its foreign language offerings, it has plenty of courses available for those who want to study such things. More prominent foreign tongues such as Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese predominate; more unusual offerings (such as Arabic, Serbo-Croatian, or Russian) are comparatively rare. Courses in various national or ethnic cultures are also taught here.

THE GREER LIBRARY

Thanks to generous donations of both money and materials, MCU's Greer Library already has over 1.5 million volumes in its collection. It's even begun a project to scan all of them into a database so students can search the entire library by computer with just a few keystrokes. In the meantime, students who need to use the actual books consider this a favorite place to study. Groups of carrels are scattered in clusters throughout the facility, and competition for the best ones — which usually means the ones with the most chance of letting the user see or talk to members of the opposite gender — is fierce on weekday nights.

Of particular interest to scholars, not to mention certain superhumans, is Greer's Rare Book Collection, a library-within-the-library of unique books, valuable first editions, antique reading materials, and much more. The RBC is kept in a special temperature-controlled series of rooms. Any student can enter the reading room and request a book, but the books themselves are kept under lock and key and can only be retrieved by trained library personnel (it's not a state of the art security system, and has no particular security measures designed to thwart supervillains specifically, but it's strong enough to foil all but truly determined attempts to steal the books). Any books “checked out” must remain in the reading room. Not all requests to obtain a rare book are approved. Only the Rare Book Committee can grant access to volumes deemed fragile, particularly valuable, or potentially dangerous (typically because of the mystical lore contained in them), and it usually only approved requests from known scholars.

The gem of the Rare Book Collection is a remarkably intact copy of the 1603 English printing of *Soldiers In Black*, a volume of blasphemous verse written by the mysterious Werner of Bavaria. So scandalous were the quatrains (and the rumors surrounding their true meaning) that the book was suppressed and all copies the authorities could find were burned. Legends say Werner was an accomplished magician and that his poems actually contain powerful mystical secrets for those who can see through his smokescreens and riddlers.

PETERSON AUDITORIUM FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

The center of MCU's artistic and cultural life, the Peterson Auditorium hosts concerts and plays on a weekly, and in some periods almost daily, basis. In addition to the central auditorium, which can seat up to 2,000, there are several rooms suitable for smaller-scale performances, galleries where works of art are displayed, and the like. The Music Department has its offices and classrooms in this building.

THE PSYCHOLOGY BUILDING

MCU has already established a reputation for the quality of its Psychology Department, which occupies this building. The first and second floors contain classrooms, while professors and grad students have their offices on the top two floors. The spacious basement features laboratories for performing psychology experiments under controlled conditions; its facilities and equipment include a sensory deprivation chamber.

RESTAURANTS

Most of MCU's eateries are found in the Inner Ring (much to the annoyance of professors and students who mostly work in the Outer Ring and have to settle for small fast food-type places unless they're willing to walk). The biggest restaurant on campus is the Gottlieb Dining Hall, a full-service campus cafeteria offering a wide variety of food for every meal. At least once a week the kitchen staff provides a “special” or “theme” meal, such as Greek Food. Despite the fact that it's perfectly fine food, students love to complain about the quality of “the Gott's” offerings.

Other campus restaurants include:

- Vanguard Veggies, a small vegetarian restaurant popular with the sorority crowd
- Caffeine HQ, a coffee shop in the Walters Student Center
- the Brooklyn Deli, a soup and sandwiches kind of place, very crowded at lunchtime
- Ferrante's, an upscale restaurant with waiters and candlelit tables
- Detroit Rock City, a burger restaurant with rock 'n' roll theme decor
- University Pizza, a pizza and Italian food place in the Walters Student Center
- the Rathskellar, a popular student bar that also serves burgers and finger food

THE SOCIOLOGY BUILDING

Most of MCU's social science departments — Sociology, Anthropology & Archaeology, History, and more — are located in this enormous building. Like the Psychology Building, it's got classrooms on the bottom two floors and offices on the top, but unlike that building it lacks a basement. (Despite this, several professors have half-jokingly called for the establishment of a “History Lab” once practical time travel devices have been invented.) The building's main entranceway features a beautiful statue of Clio, muse of history, holding a laurel wreath and scroll.

THE WALTERS STUDENT CENTER

The “WSC,” as it's mostly referred to, is another major center of campus life and social activity. It features several restaurants (see above), snack shops, the MCU Campus Bookstore (where students buy their textbooks), the Vanguard Store (where students, parents, and tourists can buy MCU memorabilia), “lounges” where students can sit and talk, and a couple of small auditoriums used for large classes during the day and movies or performances in the evenings. The student government has its offices here, as do many other student organizations, and there are plenty of other services to help students, plus rooms they can reserve for club meetings, social functions, and the like. Most students and faculty members come by the WSC at least once a day, and it's also where many outsiders first enter the campus via a People Mover station built right into the building.

THE LOOP ROAD

The second “ring” out from the Quad is the Loop Road. Three main roads feed into it from outside campus, but no roads lead further into campus. It’s lined with parking garages where visitors can park their cars, then walk the rest of the way. The only vehicles allowed inside the Loop Road are bicycles (a favorite of many students) and golf carts (used by various officials and laborers). Of course, exceptions are made in appropriate circumstances, such as hauling in building supplies to repair a structure damaged in a super-battle.

THE OUTER RING

The Outer Ring, a much larger “zone” of campus than the Inner Ring, contains three main types of buildings.

DORMITORIES

MCU students who live on campus occupy one of the many dorms in the Outer Ring. A typical dorm is 6-10 stories tall and segregated by gender by floor. Most are simple block structures, but some have wings. See *Dorm Life*, below, for more information on them.

Some of the dorms (and the typical class years of the students assigned to them) include: Witherspoon (freshmen); Preston (freshmen); Englewood (freshmen); Gilbert (freshmen); Addams (sophomores); Truesdale (sophomores); Livingston (sophomores); Wallace (sophomores, juniors); Murchison (*a.k.a.* “the Murch,” juniors); Tyndall (juniors); Loudon (juniors and seniors); Emmert (seniors); Xavier (seniors); Ford (seniors).

SCIENCE BUILDINGS AND LABORATORIES

MCU is justifiably famed for the quality of its science and engineering programs, which are housed in various buildings in the Outer Ring. These buildings typically include classrooms and offices on the first floor, or first two floors, and laboratories and workrooms on the upper floors. In addition to “hard science” work, these buildings also host classes and programs covering social aspects of the sciences, such as MCU’s award-winning curriculum in Electronic Entertainment Studies.

Some of the main science buildings include:

- the MacDonald Computer Sciences Building, home to some of the most cutting-edge computer science work being performed today
- the Thain Physics Building, which contains all sorts of exotic equipment ranging from laboratory-quality lasers to prototype devices a gadgeteer superhero (or villain!) would drool over
- the Dinapoli Chemistry Center, sometimes jokingly referred to as “Ground Zero” because of the number of accidental explosions that seem to occur in its labs
- the Harmon Biological Studies Building, built with a generous donation from Harmon Industries. It’s connected by a walkway to the MCU School of Medicine; the two facilities often share faculty and resources.
- the Roscommon School of Engineering, affectionately known as “the Rosco” among the students who study there. It’s famed for, among other things, its cutting-edge work in robotics and the development of practical-application force technologies.

THE SAKARIAN SCHOOL OF LAW

Founded and built with a generous donation from wealthy importer Arman Sakarian, MCU’s school of law has been turning out new members of the legal profession since 2001. It hasn’t yet established a position of national prominence in any particular field, though it ranks well in general. To no one’s surprise it’s developing a strong program in technology law and related fields (such as aerospace law and intellectual property law), and in superhuman law (see *Stronghold*). About half its students stay in Michigan to practice law.

Arman Sakarian recently opened discussions with MCU about funding the creation of a business school. As of early 2008 that project remains in the early phases of negotiation.

BEYOND THE OUTER RING

Located beyond the Outer Ring are a number of facilities and structures that are too big to be placed closer to the main areas of campus. They include:

CAMBRIDGE STADIUM

Named after Cambridge Biotechnologies, which funded it, Cambridge Stadium is where the MCU football team plays. It also hosts track and field meets. Large student events, including the annual graduation ceremony, the Spring Festival (a sort of carnival), and various rallies, also take place here... much to the chagrin of the groundskeeper.

THE MCU MEDICAL SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

MCU boasts a fine medical school, founded in 2000 with a student body of several hundred and growing. Despite its young age it’s already well-ranked in national surveys.

Connected to the med school by a skywalk is the MCU Hospital, a teaching facility where MCU med students help to provide care to community residents under the watchful eye of experienced physicians. While not as large or highly-regarded as MC Mercy, MCU Hospital provides fine care. It has numerous outreach programs that address the health needs of the underprivileged and try to provide basic, helpful health information to people who might not otherwise get it.

PHILLIPS FIELD

Internet billionaire Waid Phillips donated the money to build this field. The main part of it is the baseball diamond, but it’s laid out so that the groundskeeping staff can create a field for soccer, field hockey, rugby, and similar sports.

Near Phillips Field, but not considered a part of it, are MCU’s tennis courts. When not being used by the tennis team for practice or matches, they can be reserved by students for up to two hours at a time.

TAYLOR GYMNASIUM

This large building houses indoor sports facilities, primarily the University’s basketball court but also a weightlifting room, a couple of racquetball courts, and the like. Additionally the offices of the Athletic Department staff, including Coach Dupree and Athletic Director Tom Boswell, are in Taylor.

FACULTY AND STAFF



In addition to its thousands of students, MCU has a large and dedicated faculty of teachers, researchers, and administrators.

THE ADMINISTRATION

Thomas Sanford, an internationally-recognized expert on Shakespeare and former English professor at several top ten universities, has served as the President of MCU since its founding. He enjoys a casual rapport with the students, and can call dozens (if not hundreds) of them by name as he walks across campus. Immensely popular, he can usually quiet any significant campus unrest (such as the 2001 furor over some headlines in the *Weekly Advocate*) with just a few calmly-spoken words.

Besides President Sanford, three other administrators factor prominently into students' lives. The first is the Bursar, Allen Lundquist, who's responsible for taking in tuition and fees and disbursing scholarship money and other funds. Lundquist's office also oversees MCU's various work-study programs. Not a day goes by that some student with a serious problem isn't kicked up the bureaucracy to Lundquist to have that problem resolved. Lundquist does his best to be fair and sympathetic, and to help when he can, but all too often he has to give students the bad news that there's no more money available.

Students tend to get better results from Registrar Paula Fisher, who's in charge of class scheduling and a host of related matters. Fisher is a plump, friendly woman of mixed black and Hispanic ancestry who likes to be liked, so she does whatever she can to help students who have scheduling difficulties or related problems. Two years ago she was the students' biggest ally in their ultimately successful campaign to shift the overall class schedule slightly so that commuter students would find it easier to get to class on time.

Foster Demanowicz, Dean of Student Life and Activities, is another

administrator students turn to when they have problems like complaints about a professor being biased, a need to get a permit to hold a special event, or trying to persuade the University to provide some new services for students. "Dean Dem" is enormously popular with the student body, largely because he truly cares about them and helps them as much as possible. Even when he has to give a student bad news he has a way of doing it that really softens the blow.

THE FACULTY

Millennium City University has a large and varied faculty that includes academics considered to be among the best in their fields in the United States, and even the world. Besides Dr. Maxwell Brady of the Department of Archaeology, Dr. Harriet Jackson of the Department of Physics, and Dr. Bernadette Rosenbaum of the Department of Astronomy (all of whom you can read about in *Everyman*), some of the faculty's more notable members include:

DR. JORGE RODRIGUEZ

A professor of Political Science, Dr. Rodriguez grew up in Chile during the Pinochet regime and got his start as an anti-government agitator. After things got a little too hot for him he fled to the United States, earned his graduate degree, and became a professor. An expert on Latin American politics and culture who's testified before Congressional committees on several occasions, he's got Latin good looks and an enthralling baritone voice that attract women to his classes in droves. The fact that his lectures are enormously entertaining and peppered with stories about running from the secret police only makes his classes all the more popular.

DR. MARTINA CALVIN

Doctor Calvin is the academic superstar of MCU's vaunted Department of Superhuman Studies, a multidisciplinary unit that researches all aspects of superhumans and their powers. Calvin's specialty is the soft science side of things — the social and political impact super-

humans have on American society. She's written three books about the subject, all of them bestsellers, and her good looks and charming manner have made her a star on the talk-show circuit as well as around campus. (Despite this, she's also widely and deeply respected in academic circles; her work isn't just popular, it's groundbreaking and of top quality.) She's currently working on what she describes as "my biggest, most important book to date," but refuses to say exactly who or what the subject is.

ALLEN HOCHSTEDTER

The bane of Journalism students who expect cushy assignments and easy grades, Professor Hochstedter (he doesn't have Ph.D and gets annoyed if anyone calls him "Doctor") is a reporter who's still firmly entrenched in the old school. He came up through the ranks as a stringer for AP and has filed stories from every war zone, Third World hell-hole, and crisis flash point there is. He drinks like a fish (even in class, to the consternation of some students and the administration), though it never seems to affect him, and blatantly disregards "No Smoking" signs. He's absolutely uncompromising when it comes to teaching quality journalism, constantly drilling "get the facts, get the facts, get the facts!" and "go where the story is, don't expect it to come to you!" into his students' heads.

DR. RICHARD PRYNE

Some of the most cutting-edge robotics work in the world is being done by Dr. Richard Pryne of MCU's Department of Physics. Acerbic and testy, he detests teaching as a distraction from his work and refuses to even consider teaching undergraduates... and he brings in more than enough grant money to get his way. He works only with a select group of half a dozen graduate students whom he selects each year from hundreds of applicants from around the world. His repeated requests to the US government to be allowed to study remnants of Mechanon's various bodies kept in storage at Stronghold (and similar facilities) are always flatly refused, much to his intense aggravation.

Adjunct Superhero Faculty

Over the years a number of superheroes have taught classes at MCU; some teach there on a regular basis (though none are full-time faculty members). Though there are obviously some dangers

associated with attending a class taught by a superhero, who could be attacked by one of his enemies in mid-lecture, MCU's never experienced a serious incident and superhero-taught classes are always fully subscribed within minutes of registration opening. Some of the super-faculty who teach at MCU include:

DEFENDER

Defender appears as a guest lecturer in classes about electronic engineering and computer science once or twice nearly every semester.

DR. SILVERBACK

Everyone's favorite ape-about-town has taught a number of undergraduate courses as a visiting professor, in fields as varied as Physics, Biology, pop culture studies, and Superhuman Studies. When the mood takes him he sometimes arranges to teach intense graduate seminars on very specific topics that interest him, such as evolutionary biology.

NIGHTWIND

Nightwind has taught kung fu classes as part of the Athletic Department's curriculum a couple times. Despite persistent student nagging he refuses to teach any of his secret martial arts moves, or even demonstrate them.

WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft occasionally guest-lectures to Department of Anthropology seminars about various aspects of mythology and mysticism. She tends not to do it often because she finds so many of the students to be skeptical of what she says, despite all the evidence that she knows what she's talking about. MCUers still talk about the time she turned a particularly obnoxious student into a frog to demonstrate that magic wasn't "just card tricks."

THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Athletic Director Tom Boswell, who's in charge of MCU's athletics programs, is a bull-necked (and often bull-headed) fellow who played football for the University of Nebraska and the Los Angeles Rams in his youth. He's been accused of favoring the football team over all the other University sports programs, a charge he flatly denies and for which there's no real evidence. He spends a lot of time on the road either meeting with local alumni groups to encourage support (and donations) for the University or as part of MCU's athlete recruitment efforts.



The only campus figure who can rival President Sanford in popularity is Coach LeRoy Dupree, who's led the football team to a winning season every year since 1997. A short, feisty black man, he often comes across as sort of a lovably opinionated loudmouth, but the truth is he's got both book smarts and street smarts and usually knows *exactly* what he's doing and saying — he's not just mouthing off. A lot of other coaches have underestimated him over the years, and that's one of the secrets of his success. He's a frequent figure on the fund-

raising circuit and always a big hit with the alums.

MCU's basketball coach, Terry Tucker, isn't quite as well received. He's had his share of winning seasons, but has yet to achieve real college basketball success (*i.e.*, a spot in the NCAA or NIT tournaments). His players like him, and many students admire him for his involvement with all sorts of campus projects and charitable activities, but if he doesn't start turning in winning seasons consistently he won't be long for his job.

STUDENT LIFE



College isn't just lectures and term papers. Like any other major institution of higher learning, MCU is a rich social tapestry where all sorts of things go on outside the classroom.

ANNUAL EVENTS

Besides the traditional American holidays, which are usually observed with a class recess of a day or more, MCU celebrates several annual events. The first is Homecoming, held in late October or early November every year. Many alumni return for the event, and Greek organizations and other campus groups compete to see who can create the prizewinning float for the parade that takes place before the game.

In late January MCU holds Parents' Day. It was instituted just a few years ago when MCU's student body diversified to the point where more than half the students didn't come from homes within a couple hours' driving distance of campus. Parents are encouraged to come for a long weekend, attend classes and other events with their student, and learn more about campus life. Many students find this to be an excruciating ordeal that involves concealing their drinking habits.

For Valentine's Day, the Greek organizations and several charitable groups on campus compete to sell red carnations to the students, which the organizations then deliver to the indicated recipient (typically the buyer's girlfriend or boyfriend) on February 14. All proceeds go to charity, and the organization that sells the most flowers gets an additional contribution from President Sanford's discretionary fund (and bragging rights, of course!). Competition is fierce; it's not unknown for well-heeled alumni to help out their old fraternity or sorority by making a large flower purchase.

The annual ritual of Spring Break occurs in mid- to late March. Eager to escape the lingering Michigan winter, hundreds of students trek to Florida, Mexico, California, and other warm climes for a week of (depending on personal preference) idle fun or Dionysian debauchery. The school administration mounts a campaign every year encourag-

ing "responsible Spring Break behavior," but for all too many students it falls on deaf ears.

The last major event of the MCU year (aside from graduation) is the Spring Festival, which takes place in last April or early May. Hundreds of vendors sell food from around the world, eclectic clothing, books, and anything else students could want. Many types of artists and performers appear, usually with at least one big-name headliner appearing.

CAMPUS NEWSPAPERS

Besides going online, MCU students have several ways to get the latest news about what's happening on campus and around the world. The University's main student newspaper is the *Daily Vanguard*, produced by a dedicated staff of perpetually sleep-deprived student publishers and reporters. In addition to articles and interviews about campus activities, it's got a popular comics and puzzles page, and also runs classified ads for students looking to buy or sell dorm refrigerators, used textbooks, and other stuff.

Although "the DV" (as it's known) is MCU's only daily newspapers, several others are published by students, typically on a weekly or monthly basis. The *University Beacon* is a leftist (sometimes verging on Communist) paper popular with many students; it comes out every Thursday. The smaller right-wing contingent on campus counters every Friday with the *Weekly Advocate*. Incendiary writing in the *Advocate* has caused an uproar or three over the years, though the administration has strongly condemned the leftists' occasional tactic of expressing their disagreement with the *Advocate* by taking all the issues from the stands before the student body can see them. *Advocate* chief editor James Hasselbeck is unrepentant about the newspaper's conduct and often seems to go out of his way to rile up liberal students, making him extremely unpopular in some quarters.

DORM LIFE

About two-thirds of MCU's undergraduates, and a third of her graduate students, live in the campus dormitories. (The university's presence in such a highly-populated urban area makes it easy for students to commute if they prefer.) See above regarding dormitory names.

MCU dormitories are segregated by gender by floor (or sometimes by wing, in buildings that have wings). Students who want to cohabitate can sometimes figure out illicit ways around this, but usually a couple that wants to live together just finds off-campus housing.

Most of the rooms are designed to house two students and share a common bathroom with another room of two students, but there are one or two "singles" available on most floors for a higher annual fee. In addition to the two beds, the dorm rooms come furnished with two desks, two bookshelves, two dressers, and one shared closet. Most students buy or rent a small refrigerator as well. This doesn't leave too much room to move around, but the students get used to it; some save space by building a large wooden frame that holds the two beds as bunkbeds. Each floor or wing also has one or two shower rooms that include several toilets for those annoying times when your roommate just *won't* get out of the dorm bathroom.

Common facilities for each dorm — laundry room, one or two television rooms, a couple of rooms students can reserve for study groups or social activities, vending machine room, and so on — are on the ground floor (though some of the larger dorm buildings have a second laundry room about halfway up).

Most dorms also have offices on the first floor where one or two administrators tasked with "looking after" that dorm (in addition to any other duties they might have) work. Students who have a problem — ranging from seeing a mouse in their room, to personality clashes with roommates, to class scheduling questions — can visit these administrators during working hours. Additionally, each floor has at least one resident advisor ("RA"), a grad student who gets free rooming in exchange for keeping an eye on the dorm's inhabitants. RAs range from watchful and strict to notoriously lax and indulgent; most undergrads seem to prefer the latter.

A few dorms have *professor in residence* programs that allows a university professor to live in a dorm room rent-free as a way of encouraging student-

faculty interaction. For the most part this program is widely praised, though it has led to a few cases of improper fraternization that have resulted in professors getting dismissed.

FOOD AND MEAL PLANS

No MCU dorms feature any eating facilities, much to the students' annoyance at times. Additionally, it's against university rules for students to cook food in their rooms, though well over three-quarters of them defy this ban by having toaster ovens, microwaves, and/or coffee pots. The University expects students to eat either at one of the on-campus restaurants, or to make their own arrangements off-campus. For the former, MCU offers a selection of "meal plans." A student on a meal plan purchases, as part of his overall tuition and expenses package, a debit card that's only usable at MCU eateries. He can add more money to the card if he runs out, and if he has any left over at the end of the year it rolls over to next year (or he gets a refund if he's graduating). Meal plans range from cheap (one meal per day) to full coverage (three meals a day plus periodic snacks). Students on a budget often get the cheap plan and simply eat one huge meal a day at Gottlieb Dining Hall — a practice the Student Health department frowns on but has never had any luck in stopping.

SOCIAL LIFE

MCU has an active and varied social life. Among the majority of students the preferred activity is "partying," which usually involves consuming lots of alcohol (though in recent years the University's become much more vigilant about preventing underage drinking and binge drinking, with some success). But that's far from the only form of socialization available. On any given night at MCU one can usually find movies being shown, poetry readings being held, discussion groups and student clubs holding meetings, lectures being given, and concerts being performed.

Naturally, social life takes an upswing on the weekends. Many students define "the weekend" as beginning Thursday night; class attendance on Fridays is lower than any other day of the week. Saturday night is when the biggest parties and events are held; campus organizations often reserve the choicest dates with the Greek Leadership Council (see below) months in advance.

THE GREEK SCENE

Almost two dozen fraternities and sororities have chapters at MCU; they're a vital part of campus social life. The beer busts, beer blasts, keggers, stein hoists, beer nights, and other activities the Greek organizations sponsor can keep a student who's part of the "in crowd" busy pretty much every night of the week. In theory the fraternities and sororities also do some charity work from time to time.

When MCU first opened, fraternities and sororities were assigned specific wings of various seniors dormitories; one perk of joining a Greek organization was that this gave sophomores and juniors the chance to live in better accommodations than they ordinarily could. But over the past several years many of the frats and sororities have grown large and active enough that they've bought houses just off-campus where a substantial portion of each organization's membership lives. Prominently decorated with the letters that identify the organization living there, the houses run the gamut from high-class and elegant to on the verge of being condemned.

The main event of the Greek year is Rush Week in late October, when interested sophomores and juniors try to gain access to the Greek organization of their choice. (By campus regulations, freshmen cannot become Greeks; seniors who aren't already Greeks almost never bother.) The result, particularly among the frats, tends to be a lot of pranks as they supposedly test prospective members' merit by gauging their cleverness and willingness to withstand humiliation. At the end of the week the organizations make their respective picks. After that the new Greeks usually undergo a three- to six-month initiation period. Hazing is a big part of the initiation period among the frats (and a few sororities), though it's pretty mild compared to what it used to be like. An incident four years ago in which a student nearly got killed during a hazing event forced the University to crack down hard.

The Greek Leadership Council (GLC) is in charge of overseeing Greek life at MCU. Primarily its duties are (a) to approve new fraternities and sororities that want to open a chapter on campus, (b) coordinating the organizations' activities to prevent conflicts, and (c) ensuring that each organization meets the University's minimum standards to remain on campus (e.g., the members have to maintain a certain average grade point ranking). Led by Gabe Stanley of Alpha Alpha Mu (one of the most exclusive frats on campus, which attracts

a lot of athletes and other "big men on campus"), the GLC has taken a soft line on disciplinary matters in recent years, often intervening with the administration to save troubled frats and sororities from losing their accreditation. As a result, Stanley is wildly popular among much of the campus population.

OTHER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Beyond the Greeks, there are literally hundreds of other campus organizations that students can join, covering the gamut of student interests. There are racial and ethnic groups (the African-American Student Association, the MCU Arab Alliance, and many, many more), hobby-related organizations (the MCU Chess Club, the MCU Apple Users Conclave, the MCU Roleplaying Game Club, the Jane Austen Appreciation Society, and so on), intramural sports leagues, and political and charitable organizations (Young Republicans and Young Democrats, Students for Social Change, MCU Right To Life, an MCU chapter of Habitat for Humanity, and so forth). No matter what a student's interests, the odds are he can find a group at MCU devoted to that particular subject.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The MCU student body is represented by the Students' Association of Millennium City University (SAMCU), usually referred to by the nickname "SAM." SAM is a representative body consisting of "legislators" elected by each dormitory based on population, plus a dozen at-large members. Leading the organization are a President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, who each serve for a one-year term.

The election season for student government is in April, and any student in good standing is eligible to run for either a dorm rep position, an at-large seat, or one of the three officer positions. The student elections tend to get a lot of play in the campus newspapers and are a big deal to students interested in campus politics, but the average student seems to pay relatively little attention. Except in years when there's some major hot-button issue, voting falls well below 50% of the student population.

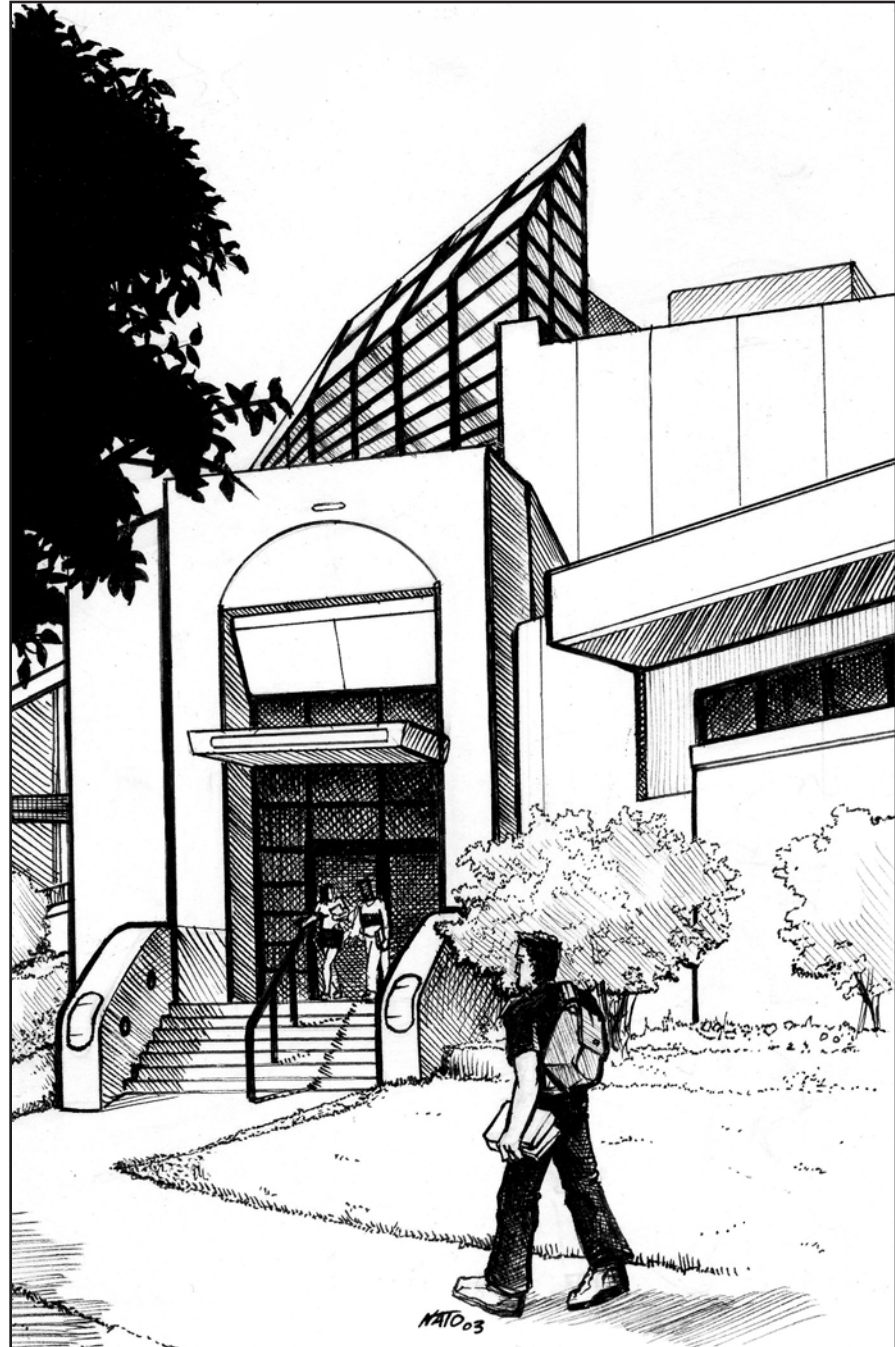
The main functions of SAM (which holds open to the public meetings every Monday night) are twofold. First, it represents the student body on matters of interest to it. For example, SAM might lobby the MCU administration for more computer

hubs on campus, the creation of a new eatery, or a reduction in certain University fees. It can be fairly said that SAM tends to do a lot of good on getting small matters addressed, but tends to have relatively little impact on broader issues simply because the University rarely has the money to quickly implement changes or additions the students want. SAM often brings major ideas to the administration that are worth considering, but even the ones the administration agrees to usually take years to put into place.

Second, SAM administers the Student Activity Fee (SAF). Every student enrolled at MCU has to pay a \$150 annual SAF that funds student organizations and activities. The head of the Student Activity Committee of SAM, who's appointed by the President, is arguably the most important and powerful member of student government, since he and his committee decide which student organizations get funding, and how much. Each student organization submits a proposed budget in September and then receives whatever funding the SAC thinks it deserves. The major student organizations, such as the African-American Student Association and the intramural sports leagues, tend to get the lion's share of the total SAF fund, but nearly any legitimate student organization can get at least a little. For example, the Chess Club usually receives a couple hundred dollars for the purchase of new chess equipment and to help defray the Club's expenses for attending chess tournaments.

WIRED LIFE

Naturally, MCU is as "wired" as Millennium City itself. All dorm rooms and classrooms have broadband Internet access, and the entire campus is a wireless access point. All students must have a laptop computer when they enroll, but MCU also provides "computer nodes" of about a dozen computers each plus a printer in various places around campus. Students can use the MCU network to exchange messages, interact via MySpace and Facebook, buy goods from campus stores, order



food from off-campus eateries that deliver, and even place an order "to go" with any of the campus restaurants. All of the campus's cash registers are set up with infrared ports that let the device link up with a student's cell phone or PDA to quickly deduct the

amount of the purchase from the student's campus account, making cash relatively uncommon in the stores. Many students have commented on how frustrating it is to graduate and go out into a "real world" that lacks so many of these conveniences.

SUPERHUMANS ON CAMPUS



WARNING: this section is for *the GM's eyes only*. It contains secret information about MCU that wouldn't be known to administrators or students. If you're a player, don't read this section unless you have your GM's permission to do so.

Besides the superheroes who occasionally serve as professors (see above), there's a population of superhumans — both heroes and villains — who exist in secret on the MCU campus. It's widely assumed that some superheroes and villains are MCU professors or students in their secret identities, and playing "guess who's a super" is a favorite gossipy pas-time among some students.

SUPERHEROES

A number of superheroes teach at or attend MCU in their secret identities, including:

El Aguijón: This member of the Millennium City 8 is secretly Professor Alejandro Montez of the Department of Biology. A specialist in entomology, he mostly teaches small seminars to upperclassmen and undergraduates while researching ways to improve the human condition with regard to insect life. (See *Digital Hero*.)

Richard Reiger: Happy-go-lucky history major Richard Reiger is secretly the superhero Aegis, who has force-manipulation powers. He's not an active superhero by any means, but he's willing to put on his costume and pitch in if an emergency arises.

Sai: Susie Jefferson, formerly a student at the Ravenswood Academy, takes courses part-time at MCU. She has yet to pick a major. (See *Teen Champions*.)

Jerry Spencer: One of the most gifted students in the Electronic Engineering and Computer Science departments (double major), Jerry has ambitions to become a gadgeteer superhero and has already made a pretty good start. Using the name Diode, he's fought crime successfully several times, though he has yet to face a supervillain. Some of his gadgets include rocket boots, force field-generating bracers, a blaster pistol

he can configure to fire different types of energy beams, a helmet with various sensory and communications devices, and a belt that gives him some telekinetic powers. His costume includes a chest harness with multiple pockets to hold spare parts that he can use to build gadgets on the fly.

SUPERVILLAINS

Villainous Lectures

The following supervillains teach at MCU, either full-time or part-time:

The Basilisk: Professor Allen Walker teaches in the History Department, with a specialty in medieval and Renaissance studies. He mostly teaches undergraduates. (See *Villains, Vandals, And Vermin*.)

Grenadier: Professor Debra Kiser still teaches in the Physics Department despite having gained superpowers and become a villain. She used to be one of the most popular professors in the department, but the accident that gave her powers also made her coldhearted, with a biting, sarcastic wit, and her popularity has plummeted accordingly. (See *Villains, Vandals, And Vermin*.)

Howler: Howler is secretly Professor Susan Sonderheim of the Department of Archaeology, specializing in the history of the Middle East and northern/central Africa (excluding Egypt). She usually only teaches one class a year, a seminar for upperclassmen and early grad students; colleagues often describe her as "distracted." (See *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*.)

Tachyon: Professor Steve Maxwell got his powers from an accident involving kellarite when he was a student at the MCU Department of Astronomy. He teaches undergraduate and graduate astronomy courses at the University, and sometimes even consults with the government on matters pertaining to alien life and civilizations. (See *Champions*.)

Thorn: As Professor Lawrence Lloyd, he still teaches in the Department of Botany part-time. He always wears loose, long-

sleeved clothing to hide the changes to his physical form, and uses makeup and wigs to make his face look normal. (See *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*.)

Other MCU-Associated Villains

The following supervillains are associated with MCU in some way:

Anubis: Ethan Neritski was a graduate student in MCU's Department of Archaeology when he became Anubis. Today he spends a lot of time in his Secret Identity at Greer Library researching Egyptology and related matters. (See *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*.)

Black Fang: James Talmadge is still a student at MCU, barely squeaking by semester after semester as he wrestles with his inner demon... or rather, inner wolf. In werewolf form he's been sighted on campus a couple times, and is responsible for two gruesome and as yet unsolved murders that took place just off campus a few months ago. (See *Arcane Adversaries*.)

Lodestone: Lodestone was a physics student at MCU when he got his magnetism powers from a lab accident. He no longer has any close association with the University. (See *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*.)

Ricochet: Ricochet was an MCU student when he conducted the "experiment" that gave him his powers over kinetic energy. He has no real connection to the University anymore. (See *Villains, Vandals, And Vermin*.)

Thunderbolt II: Thunderbolt II got his powers from the same accident that created Tachyon (see above). He no longer has any close association with the University. (See *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*.)

