

TRiO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

November & December 2017

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

IN THIS ISSUE

Get Ready for the Homestretch

by Gaurav Khanna,
Director of the Visions and Rx Programs

Hello from the TRIO offices! I know it feels like the semester just started yesterday and we can still walk around outside without a jacket, but the semester is beginning its homestretch! Before you know it, Thanksgiving will be here and finals soon after. This is the time to get your ducks in a row: review the work you have to complete, make a plan to do it, and then set aside time to get things accomplished. Use the breaks wisely so you can put your best food forward!

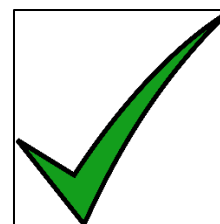
The TRIO staff are here to support you. We have had an unprecedented demand for tutoring this semester, but there are still a few spots open if you need help in writing or math. We have two financial literacy seminars planned for November 15 and 29—"Frugal Living" and "The Savvy Consumer"—both of which are timed to help you weather the holidays (sometimes I think the jingle should be "the most expensive time of the year"!)

We're also excited to get you registered for the Spring semester. Enrollment for returning students begins November 1, 2017. Continuing students get to choose their classes first before new students can register, so use this time wisely and set up a schedule that works for you. We will have open labs on

November 1 and 2 during the lunch hours in room 240. If you prefer a one-on-one meeting to set up your classes, you can also sign up on advisors' doors in the office. Take a look at the classes being offered so we can have an informed conversation at your appointments.

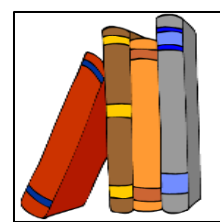
As in the past, we will be offering Supplemental Instruction sections with tutors in classes. We will have a section of ENG102, A&P I – BIO199, MAT092, and MAT143. If you need any of these classes, please let us know while discussing registration, and we can place you appropriately.

Last but not least, join us for the End of Semester Gathering on December 11 at 12:30 in the South Café. Rx and Visions students will celebrate completing yet another semester and a step towards their academic goals. As always, we are in your corner—let us help you on your journey to academic success!



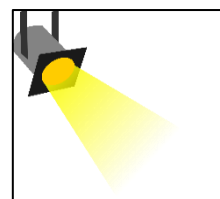
Registration & Finals

It's time to think about final exams and registration for spring semester.



Can A Teacher Change Your Life?

Todd shares his experience with someone who left a lasting impression.



Student Spotlight

Sadiya shares her journey to education and her plans for the future.

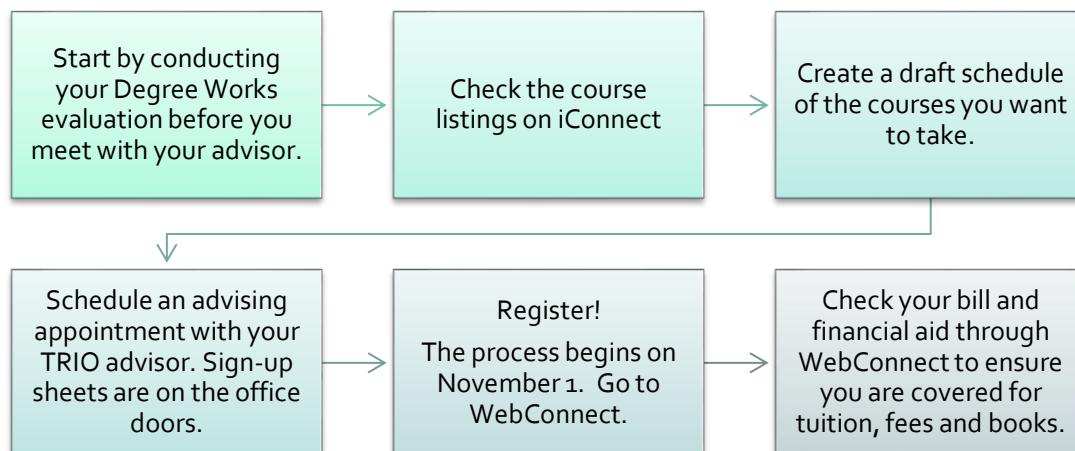
TRIO Complex Hours

Monday-Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Let's Register!

by Catherine Maddox-Wiley
Rx Retention Counselor

Believe it or not, it's time to choose spring semester courses! Students are encouraged to start the advising and registration process early by following these steps. Get the courses you want, not the courses that are left!



A Student's "How-to Guide" for Surviving Finals

by Ashley Dill

Visions Academic Advisor

The end of the semester means finals exams are fast approaching. Does the word "finals" send a shiver down your spine? Fear not! Using these tips, you'll find that finals aren't as impossible as they seem:

Plan ahead

Nothing about school brings more stress than getting an assignment done, or studying for a test, at the last minute. Most final projects and tests have many parts, which could mean at least a couple weeks of work on different sections. Don't put off work until later because it seems too hard or too much, especially if you know you have the time now but will be busier later. Dive in and figure out what you need to do to get the work done. Cramming the night before a test isn't the answer either. Spread out the studying and you'll absorb the information better.



Prioritize your studying and maximize your time

Figure out what you need to work on first, second, third, etc. Some classes will need more attention than others, so plan to devote more time to those assignments and

start on them first. Note which final tests or projects are scheduled or due first, second, etc. so you can plan which ones can wait and which ones need attention now. Always allot more time than you think you will need to work on something, as sometimes tasks can take longer than expected.

Take care of yourself

Finals time is when your brain needs all the support and rest it can get! Make sure to eat well and have healthy snacks, such as nuts and fruits, and drink plenty of water. Even if you can't get 8 hours of sleep, try to get as much as possible since your brain needs sleep in order to process and store information. A rested brain means more focused thinking. You'll have an easier time recalling and understanding the information needed.

Break up studying time

Don't study for 4 hours straight with no break! Your brain can't absorb that much information at a time. Instead, take a 10-15 minute break every hour. Dance, listen to music, or take a walk outside to clear your head. Move around after all that sitting! Also, don't study everything for one test before starting on another. Go back and forth between studying for different classes and you will have an easier time absorbing the information.

Eliminate distraction and keep a positive focus

Study in a place that is quiet and won't pull your focus away from studying. If where you live is distracting, spend time in the library in

a quiet corner. Don't listen to music while you're studying unless it is music without vocals (i.e. classical) since that can pull your focus. Also, keep a positive outlook about your abilities while studying – it's the first step towards accomplishing your goals!



Use your support system

Don't hesitate to ask your professor for help! Professors want you to succeed but they can't help you if they don't know you're struggling. Ask questions so you are clear on what you need to do. Also have a session with a tutor (in-person or online) to work on problem areas and get help with prioritizing your work. Talk to your TRIO advisor if you have questions. Asking questions means you are taking control of your learning!

Finals are not impossible, but they are something you must approach with a plan in order to be successful. Use the resources you have and put forth your best efforts – you can do it!

Can a Teacher Change Your Life?

by Todd Bennett

Visions Transfer Counselor

Working in a college, I often think about the value of education. I ask myself questions: Are we positively influencing students? Can a class or a teacher change a student's life? It seems possible, but I often wondered what that looked like. Recently I stumbled onto an answer.

As many of you know, I spent the last year traveling with my family on a sailboat along the east coast and part of the Caribbean. One of the most common questions people ask is "How did you learn how to sail?" or "Did your parents have a boat?"....I always chuckle to myself as I imagine my parents stepping on a boat. Despite all of my sailing adventures, I have never seen either of my parents set foot on a small boat. In fact, I don't think they know how to swim and that is probably a logical reason I have never seen them in more than knee-deep water. It also explains their logical fear of small boats. If I didn't learn sailing from my parents....then from whom? One doesn't just wake up with a passion for something one day....I thought about how this passion of mine came about. The question brought me back to my childhood and a special fifth

grade teacher, Jim Whaley. Mr. Whaley had a passion for the ocean and marine life—a passion that he shared with his students. We spent the year studying whales, learning about the history of whaling in New England; we sang old whaling songs and read an amazing book called *Dove*, by Robin Lee Graham, a true adventure story about a teenager who sailed around the world by himself. The year ended with an overnight trip to Cape Cod (which was a new adventure for many of us growing up in Northern Vermont) where we went on a boat trip and saw the whales we had spent the year studying.

So there it was—I had my answer. My life was changed and impacted profoundly through the efforts of an excellent teacher and a great book. Mr. Whaley cultivated an interest and passion in something that I never knew much about. After fifth grade, I spent many years dreaming about life on the water and living my own nautical adventure.

One of the things I did upon getting my first job after graduating from college was

taking a sailing class....a couple months later I came across an ad on craigslist that read "used sailboat for \$1000." A day later, that boat was mine. I spent my weekends on the Chesapeake Bay tinkering with my boat and building my sailing skills. Friends would often join me for these sailing adventures (or debacles depending on who you asked). Short trips led to week-long trips, which led to a year-long trip with my girlfriend, who ultimately became my wife. (On a side note, I do recommend living in a tiny boat that you can't even stand up in for a year as a great test of compatibility). Over the past year, we were able to sail again, but this time, we shared the joy, excitement, and memories with our three children.

Education can open doors to future interests, goals, and adventures. If this has not happened yet, keep an open mind; college is a place where you will learn new ideas and beliefs, study about different cultures, and explore opportunities that you may not have known existed.

My advice—Keep your eyes open, try new things, dare to dream and explore, take risks, don't limit yourself to what you have already known, and finally, enjoy the ride.

Taking Baby Steps toward Frugal Living: 10 Places to Start

by Joyce Kulig

Visions Retention Counselor

1. Frugality is a life style change.
2. Frugality means smarter money management and smarter spending.
3. Frugality means harvesting your creativity.

Like any lifestyle change, living frugally needs a positive "I can do it" mindset. The end result of frugal living is managing your money better, managing your spending better and using your creativity to live a lifestyle that works with your money goals. These goals could be a trip, a large purchase, or a greater sense of financial security.

Places to begin:

- No more bottled water and only drink water at restaurants
- Use household items to the last drop
- Check your local library for museum passes
- Visit online yard sales and second-hand shops
- Use coupons ONLY when they really save you money
- Count and save your change (put it in a savings account)
- Pack a lunch and snacks
- NEVER buy things full price
- Always shop with a list and only veer from it when you spot a great sale.
- Participate in a no-spend month. Pay your bills, buy only gasoline and groceries, look for freebies, and put the

money you save into a savings account. Increase this activity to a few times a year.

You can read this list or the many lists on the internet. Start by understanding your spending habits and your budget, then pick a few spending behaviors to change. Once these behaviors become habitual, add another and then another. Be sure to take a break periodically from frugality to prevent "frugality fatigue." Treat yourself to an ice cream cone.

Also, always remember the best investment you can make is in yourself and in education!



Student Spotlight: Sadiya Clark

By Catherine Maddox-Wiley

Rx Retention Counselor

Cool, calm and collected. That's Sadiya Clark! She has chosen a nursing career, but that wasn't always her path. Actor and correctional officer were also on her radar. What changed her direction? A trip to Haiti! When given an opportunity in high school to join a program that provided healthcare and other services to children in orphanages run by nuns, Sadiya helped raise the funds to go. She beams at the memories of joining nurses for this seven-day trip where she spent time with the children, took them to the beach, and distributed school supplies and stickers, which the children liked adhering to their bodies. She held babies, took care of those who were sick and fed them. The work took her to many poor towns, and observing the care that the nurses provided convinced Sadiya that nursing was her calling, too.



Sadiya's plans for nursing took a twist and a turn. The summer after her high school graduation, Sadiya earned her CNA, worked in an assisted living facility, and moved out on her own, very mature choices for someone so young.

Sadiya credits her can-do character to her parents who worked a lot and who needed her help in raising her sister. As a dual-enrollment student in high school, Sadiya was familiar with MWCC and began taking her pre-requisites for the Practical Nursing program. She applied and was accepted to the program, but due to the premature birth of her first child, she delayed going into the program. While waiting to reapply the following year, Sadiya continued taking coursework towards the Registered Nursing program, believing that things happen for a reason. Sadiya excelled in the PN program and gave birth to her second child at the end

of the summer maternity rotation and one week before the start of her final semester. She delivered at the same hospital where she did her clinicals. She never blinked. Cool, calm and collected!

With personal responsibilities comes the question of how to do it all. Sadiya gives a great deal of credit to her children's father, her mother and to CCAMPIS. She confirms the importance of having support and making school a priority.

After her PN graduation in December 2016, Sadiya was accepted into the Advanced Standing RN program and is working at a maximum-security prison as a LPN.



Because of the type of facility, she is able to conduct advanced nursing procedures and is learning a lot that textbooks can't teach. She says the work is fast-paced and good preparation for ER work. Sadiya's next move after graduating with her associate's degree in May is to consider MCPHS where she will prepare for a master's degree and ultimately a career as a nurse anesthesiologist. She has sage advice for all who are pursuing healthcare careers: have back-up plans, save money for gas and transportation, stay organized, think about what you want in the long run, not what's going on now. Sadiya has a personal experience with back-up plans: On the first day of her PN clinical, her car broke down. Fortunately, she had AAA and made it to clinical on time. Cool, calm and collected!

Semester in Snapshots



We have had a busy fall semester and look forward to an active spring! From gatherings and apple picking to advising and tutoring, the TRIO team has enjoyed working with you on this part of your journey.

Transfer Tours

Check out the transfer visits planned for November!

UMASS Lowell

Friday, November 3

Westfield State College

Tuesday, November 7.

Mount Holyoke College

Francis Perkins Program

Thursday, November 9

Smith College

Ada Comstock Program

Friday, November 10

Connect with Lisa Naze and Todd Bennett to discuss your career and educational goals. Schedule your appointment today!

TRIO Staff Reflect on Seasonal Changes

By Lisa Naze

Rx Transfer Counselor

The change in seasons causes us to put away the shorts, sunscreen and grill, and take out our sweaters, sleds and recipes that warm the hearth and the soul. The cool crisp air and changing scenery always makes me reflect on past years and the traditions and memories I carry with me. It makes me long for the days I would gather with my extended family every Sunday to enjoy traditional family recipes I still try to duplicate today and each other's company. I have asked our staff members in TRIO to share their memories and plans for the change in seasons. I hope you find time to enjoy and reflect on the changing seasons as well.

Something that I love to do with my friends every year in December is have a cookie decorating party. It used to be something I did as a kid, but the tradition has been revived within the last few years, thanks to one of my friends. We all pre-make different types of cookie dough and then come together to cut out, bake, and decorate them in different ways. It's a fun time to socialize with each other and, afterwards, we end up with a bunch of beautiful cookies to enjoy!" ~ Ashley Dill, Visions Advisor

"The changing of seasons is one the best parts of living in New England. I am looking forward to playing in the snow with my kids, skiing, ice skating, sitting by the woodstove, and of course, maybe eating some homemade apple pie." ~ Todd Bennett, Visions Transfer Counselor

"My favorite winter memory was one Christmas Eve when my whole family (my

aunt, uncle, grandparents, mom and dad) all went sledding on the big hill behind my house. It was perfect snow for sledding, and the moon reflecting on the snow lit up the entire field. We had a big green toboggan that we could fit almost everyone on at once!" ~ Stephanie Giguere, Visions Learning Specialist

"Being from a big Italian family, we have a lot of holiday traditions, but my favorite is Christmas Eve rice balls. We would get together with my grandmother and aunt to make them the week before. There was always an argument as to who ate the most or who was taking the most home! Now that they have passed away, the tradition continues with my cousins and our children and now their children! And my dad and uncle still argue over who is getting the most!" ~ Paula Clapp, Visions Learning Specialist

"One of my favorite winter memories is enjoying hot chocolate after shoveling the driveway. It was a tradition that started when I was a child helping my parents and has lasted into my adulthood. I like to dress up my hot chocolate with French Vanilla coffee creamer or Fluff and a candy cane." ~ Sara Williams, Management Assistant

"October is the month for Homecoming events in the area high schools. I was a cheerleader as a student and rocked the royal blue and white colors of Narragansett Regional High School while reciting the Warrior cheer and routine during the half time show of the Homecoming football game on the field in front of the stands. This year, my

friend and cheerleading coach Sheryl who has coached for 20 years was inducted into the Narragansett Athletic Hall of Fame. To commemorate this occasion, I joined over 60 ladies and former coaches in donning our colors and performing our routine again. I was both nervous and excited!" ~ Margaret McNamara, Visions Math Tutor



"The biggest festival for me growing up in India was "Diwali" or the festival of lights. The dates for the festival are determined by the lunar calendar but it typically falls in October or November. The festival marks the victory of good over evil in mythology as well as the start of the Hindu new year and is celebrated by people of many faiths. Families will give their homes a good cleaning and light lamps and candles around the house to welcome prosperity for the upcoming year. Businesses start a new accounting cycle. Friends and family exchange traditional sweets and gifts so you are left with a huge pile of goodies to get through. The day is capped off by everyone setting off fireworks in the streets (scary yet exciting as a child!) starting in the evening and going into the early hours." ~Gaurav Khanna, Director

End of Semester Checklist

- ✓ Study for exams
- ✓ Finish papers & projects
- ✓ Eat & sleep well
- ✓ Connect with friends & classmates
- ✓ Register for Spring 2018 (or let your TRIO advisor know your plans!)
- ✓ Check your email daily

TRIO End of Semester Gathering

Monday, December 11, 2017

12:30-1:30 p.m.

South Café

Join the Rx and Visions staff as we celebrate the end of another successful semester!

Pizza, salad, fun & prizes!

FAFSA DAYS

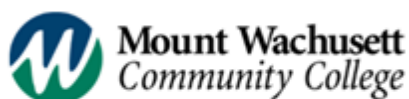
Wednesday, January 3 &

Thursday, January 4

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

TRIO Complex

Maximize your time and financial aid award by completing your FAFSA for the 2018-2019 academic year in January! Stop in for help from the TRIO staff!



444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000

November/December 2017 List of Important Dates

Check your email daily for the most up-to-date information on program events and campus news

<i>Wednesday, November 1- Thursday, November 9</i>	Priority Registration of Continuing Students	<i>Monday, December 4</i>	Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw
<i>Wednesday, November 1</i>	Cycle 2: Classes Begin Spring 2018 Registration Open Lab 12:30- 1:30 p.m. Room 240	<i>Monday, December 11</i>	TRIO End-of-Semester Gathering 12:30-1:30 p.m. South Café
<i>Thursday, November 2</i>	Spring 2018 Registration Open Lab 12:30- 1:30 p.m. Room 240	<i>Saturday, December 23</i>	Full Semester & Cycle 2: Last day of classes
<i>Thursday, November 9</i>	Full Semester: Last Day to Withdraw		
<i>Friday, November 10 – Saturday, November 11</i>	Veterans Day: No classes all campuses, day and evening		
<i>Monday, November 13</i>	Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw with 50% refund		
<i>Wednesday, November 15</i>	Frugal Living 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room W11		
<i>Wednesday, November 22</i>	Friday Schedule for all day classes all campuses (no evening)		
<i>Thursday, November 23- Saturday, November 25</i>	Thanksgiving Holiday: No classes all campuses, day and evening		
<i>Wednesday, November 29</i>	The Savvy Consumer 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room W11		

If you have a disability and require accommodations in order to participate fully in program activities, please contact the program director to discuss your specific needs.

Affirmative Action/ Equal Opportunity Institution