

# TRiO

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## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

# September 2018

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

IN THIS ISSUE

## Celebrating TRIO SSS at 50

by Gaurav Khanna,

Director of the Visions and Rx Programs

Welcome back! As the new academic year begins, we're glad to have all of you on campus during a year of celebration for our programs. Both the Visions and Rx Programs are funded by TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) grants that came into existence in 1968. Mount Wachusett Community College has been dedicated to maintaining these programs throughout the decades. Visions has been on campus for 39 years, and the Rx Program is now starting its ninth year. Read more about the programs and TRIO in Mary Roth's article on pages 4 & 5.

We've had a busy summer working with students. Similar to last year, we had a very active semester with large numbers of students taking classes to continue work on their degree programs. We went to Washington D.C. after graduation. In addition, we invited an expert to campus for a training to help us better assist under-resourced students.

This newsletter is packed with useful information, so take a few minutes to

look through it. Inside, you'll find a quick reminder of the features available through iConnect, a refresher on time management skills, plans for transfer visits this fall, and the profile of an exceptional student.

Please join us in welcoming Emma Lynch, our new afternoon academic advisor. You can stop by and meet her for a walk-in or scheduled appointment between 1:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday. Emma's bio can be found on page 6.

As it was fifty years ago, the commitment to you, our TRIO participants, remains unchanged: supporting our students to achieve success at Mount Wachusett Community College and to broaden their horizons at four-year colleges and universities. The core of our programs has and always will be YOU. So come in and do your semester check-ins as early as you can so we get your semester and year started on the right track!



### Fall Success Strategies

The Visions and Rx staff share their strategies for success.



### TRIO SSS Turns 50

Learn more about the history of TRIO grants, as well as the Visions & Rx Programs on p. 4&5.



### Student Spotlight

Read Cassie's story and how she has become a leader at MWCC.



# Time Management Boot Camp: Prioritizing

by Stephanie Giguere

Visions Professional Writing Tutor

We all have 24 hours in a day, so why are some people more productive than others? We tend to blame unfinished projects and shirked responsibilities on "not having enough time," but is that true? Do we really know where all of our time goes? The truth is: most of us have time to do the things we need, and truly want, to do. In order to prioritize what we need and want to do, we reflect on what these things are and make conscious decisions. This article will build your awareness about how you use your time, and then discuss how to prioritize your time.

The first step towards prioritization is to become more aware of how you use your time. Here are several things you can do to build your awareness:

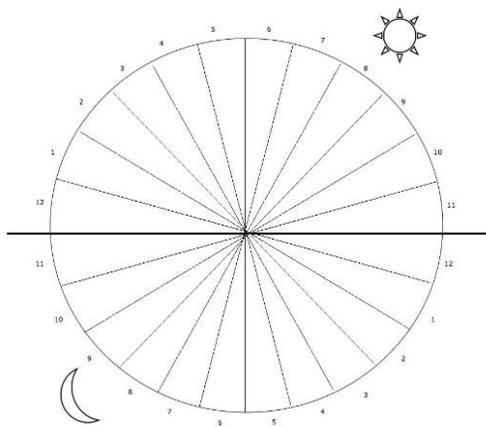
1. Fill out the pie chart to estimate how much time you spend on different activities on a typical week day. How much time do you spend sleeping, eating, working or commuting? This will only give you a rough estimate of how you use your time. It may help you brainstorm ways to get more sleep if sleep is the thing you need to prioritize more time for. Most students realize that they have more 'free time' or time spent on 'other' things than they thought.

2. Choose a day to track your activities. Try to write down when you get up in the morning, when you get in your car, when you start checking your emails and when you stop, and most importantly, when you start and finish your homework. If you can write down how much time you actually spend on each activity, you will get a more accurate picture of your day. For even more accuracy, track several days and compare.

3. Many of us underestimate the amount of time spent on our phones. I certainly did. I assumed that I spent about an hour on my phone throughout the day. When I actually looked at my battery usage, I saw that I had spent four hours on my phone in one day! What could I have done during those four hours? I definitely could have completed all of my homework. If you have an iPhone, you can check the time you spend on your phone by looking at the settings under battery usage. There are also apps available that will track your phone usage, and there are even apps that will keep you off your phone!

Prioritizing how to spend your time is not easy, especially when transitioning from everyday life to college life. College students are expected to complete more work independently-- approximately two to three hours of homework for every hour spent in class. If you are taking five courses, that's about fifteen hours spent in class and thirty hours spent studying. Yes, school is a full time job!

Step up and take control over your life. Prioritize!



## COLLEGE TECH

### Know Your College Technology & Use it!

By Joyce Kulig  
Visions Retention Specialist

iConnect is the window to your world at MWCC. From your iConnect screen you can access: BlackBoard, DegreeWorks, AwardSpring and much more. Also posted on that page are weather alerts, faculty absences and daily events.

WebConnect, also accessed via iConnect, is the program where students can register for classes, check their financial aid award, find their semester schedules, check their final grades for the semester, and so much more.

You can find direct links to the library, bookstore and student discounts (that includes a free download of Microsoft Office 365).

Plan to attend the TRIO technology workshops on September 17, 18 and 19 to acquaint yourself with MWCC technology.



### Tech Boot Camp

**My Math Lab**  
Sept. 17 at 12:30 in RM 256

**Blackboard, Gmail & Google Docs**  
Sept. 18 at 12:30 in RM 250

**Read, Write Gold**  
Sept. 19 at 12:30 in RM 250

# Dance to the Beat of Your Own Drum

by Catherine Maddox-Wiley  
Rx Retention Specialist

The following story is inspired by real students and real events. Our story-teller is Keira who is a composite of many students. She is going to tell us how she came to follow her own path and the impact that had on her life.

Hi, I'm Keira. I'm twenty-three-years old and have a five-year old son who is a cutie pie. I have always lived with my parents (Sigh!) and am working part-time at a gas station (Double Sigh!). It was my parents' idea for me to go to college. I wanted to take up art or interior design, but they said that nursing would be more of a sure thing financially. Once I started school, I tried three classes, but I struggled with the work, especially biology. I don't even like science. For two semesters, I had to retake a couple of classes and in my third semester, I convinced my parents that I needed to be a part-time student. I tried to explain to them that if I could only take two classes at a time, it would take me forever to be a nurse. They pushed me to stay on track and told me to work harder. While I knew that they meant well, I felt pressured, not encouraged. My friends didn't make me feel any better as I watched them complete bachelor's degrees and get jobs and apartments on

their own. All I could think was, "What's wrong with me?" I felt like a failure.

During a registration period, I told an advisor about my frustrations and felt silly when I started to cry. The advisor listened and asked me about my interests and dreams. I mentioned that I like art and people and confessed that I didn't want to work harder on biology. She suggested I take a career profile assessment and try psych and soc as standard college courses. I was hooked! I enjoyed going to class and participating in discussions; I understood the lectures, and I actually did the readings! The assignments were challenging but fun, and I earned my first A and B+. I wanted more and asked the advisor if we could look seriously at careers. After reviewing my career assessment, we found a list of 25 psychology careers that I would enjoy and that applied to the arts, business, counseling, education, and media, but I would need a bachelor's degree and the drive to succeed. Even still, there were no guarantees. I would have to work hard to make a living, but who doesn't? I found that online classes were right up my alley, that I could actually take two in-class courses and two online courses. The

subject matter made all the difference. I didn't struggle; I actually felt smart!

I have since graduated with my associate degree, making the Dean's List for two semesters and the President's List for one. My externship has given me some experience in agency work, and I'm now working on my bachelor's degree in psych online. I'm thinking of art therapy as a career. I don't know what my future work opportunities will be, but I know that I had to pursue what I enjoy in order to have any chance of accomplishment. If I didn't make the change, I would be sitting on the couch feeling sorry for myself. I'm still at the gas station, but I feel confident that that is temporary, so I'm able to hold on until I find something else, and believe me, I'm searching. I once read a quote by an unknown author, "Don't try to follow others' paths. Your own will lead you exactly where you need to go." I'm still nervous about my future, but I have the courage to try. My parents are even proud of my grades though they still worry about me taking care of myself and my son. I'm nervous, too, but I'm happier and much more self-assured about the decisions I'm making. Maslow said among other things that we need self-esteem, independence and achievement. I have those now . . . and then some.

## Transfer Talk

by Todd Bennett  
Visions Transfer Counselor

Summer is winding down and we are getting ready for our fall transfer trips.

### Why transfer?

-Explore great academic opportunities and the ability to take some highly specialized classes in your major and learn about almost anything you want.

For example, here are some classes you can take at UMASS-Amherst:

*Anthro 256H- Bizarre Food*  
*NRC 120-Basic Scuba Diving*  
*COMPLIT 335-Comic Art in North America*

-Meet students from around the country and around the world.

-Ability to live on campus (if you want).

-Possibility of studying in another country for a semester.

-Great income potential and job options with a bachelor's degree.

-Many top companies hire directly on campus.

### This semester we are going to:

**Fitchburg State** on Sept. 28

**UMASS-Amherst** on Oct. 19

**Smith College** on Nov. 12

Sign-up sheets are on Todd's door. During each visit, we will take a campus tour, meet with a representative from admissions, have lunch in the dining hall and we are often able to catch up with former Visions students to get the inside scoop.

As always, these trips are open to all Visions and Rx students, and transportation and lunch are provided. You are welcome to join even during your first semester. Not sure if you even want to transfer? That is fine too. The purpose of these trips is to learn more about what four-year colleges have to offer. They are great opportunities to learn something new and experience a four-year campus.

# TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Turns 50

by Mary Roth

Visions Professional Writing Tutor

Upward Bound and Talent Search are names you may recognize from your middle and high school days. You may have participated in these programs or know friends who were a part of them. However, you may not know that these programs and other student support services, including the Visions and Rx Programs, are part of a larger group of federally funded educational opportunity programs known as TRIO. TRIO was formed in 1968 as a part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. TRIO originally included Upward Bound, Talent Search and Student Support Services, but has expanded over the years to include Educational Opportunity Centers, Veterans Upward Bound, the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program and Upward Bound Math and Science programs. Fifty years later, these programs continue to promote educational opportunities in an effort to reduce poverty and increase self-sufficiency. The main purpose of these programs is to empower students to consider attending college and to provide students with educational opportunities, as well as the financial and social support they need to stay in college until graduation. Over time, these programs have received sustained funding that has endured despite political, economic and educational turbulence in keeping with President Johnson's entreaty that

*"[The War on Poverty] . . . will not be a short or easy struggle, no single weapon or strategy will suffice, but we will not rest until that war is won. The richest Nation on earth can afford to win it. We cannot afford to lose it. One thousand dollars invested in salvaging an*

*unemployable youth today can return \$40,000 or more in his lifetime."* (Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 8, 1964)

To celebrate this milestone, here is an overview of the TRIO programs at Mount Wachusett Community College.

**Talent Search** is designed to provide students in Grades 6 through 12 with an awareness of their potential to attend and succeed in college in addition to assisting them in exploring possible career paths. The Talent Search program at MWCC serves 695 students per year from 8 schools in 3 communities.

**Upward Bound Math and Science** prepares high school students for college programs in the areas of math and science. The UBMS program at MWCC serves 63 students per year from three high schools throughout the year, including school year programming and a six week residential program at the Fitchburg State University campus to get participants familiar with the college experience.

**North Central Educational Opportunities Center** provides adults living in the North Central Massachusetts area with career exploration, planning, academic and financial aid counseling. The NCEOC is a vital link between community members seeking to advance their educations and college institutions. The NCEOC serves 1,000 community members from 29 towns and cities in North Central Massachusetts.

**Student Support Services** are programs designed to assist college



students from families where neither parent has earned a four year degree (first generation), or who come from low-income backgrounds or who have disabilities to attend and persist in their college education to graduation or transfer to a four-year institution. Nationally, two-thirds of TRIO SSS program participants come from low income backgrounds where neither parent has earned a 4-year degree. On average, **41%** of participants in Student Support Services programs complete a 2-year degree as compared to 28% of nonparticipating students, and **48%** of participants in Student Support Services programs complete a 4-year degree as compared to 40% of nonparticipating students.

At MWCC, the **Visions and Rx Programs** are funded by TRIO SSS grants. They offer students both academic and social support to assist them in pursuing their associate degrees and/or transferring to a four year institution. Annually, the Visions Program serves 300 students and provides them with career and transfer counseling, academic tutoring, opportunities to attend cultural events and grant aid scholarships. The Rx Program serves 120 students in the pre-health sciences majors each year, providing them with comprehensive support services to prepare for the competitive admissions process into the healthcare majors.

## The History of the Visions & Rx Programs

by Mary Roth

Visions Professional Writing Tutor

In 1979, the Visions Program began providing student support services to its first students. The goal was simple: to provide academic and other support services to first generation, low-income students and students with disabilities to help them persist in their college education to graduation or to transfer to a four-year institution. The program began by providing essential tutoring and academic planning services to 200 students. Over the past 39 years, Visions has grown and changed to meet the needs of its participants, providing academic tutoring, academic and transfer counseling, disabilities services, as well as financial support through grant aid scholarships. It is now one of the longest operating, continuously funded grants at the college



In 2010, MWCC welcomed the Rx Program to provide specialized services for students entering the health sciences majors, including test preparation for the TEAS and NCLEX, tutoring emphasizing math and sciences, and career and transfer counseling customized to the health care fields. In 2015, Visions expanded to serve 300 students and added additional services to meet the needs of students with disabilities, including the hiring of learning specialists to help students develop specific learning and studying strategies based on their individual strengths and challenges. The Visions and Rx Programs continue to serve approximately 420 students each year at MWCC.



The Visions and Rx Programs have always been dedicated to helping students reach their full-potential. Check out this picture from 1999 where the Visions Program took a group of students to New York City. Can you spot a familiar face?

## TRIO By the Numbers

### MASSACHUSETTS

Number of TRIO Projects: **62**

Educational Opportunity Center Projects: **4\***

Students with Disabilities Projects: **2\***

McNair Post Baccalaureate Projects: **4**

Student Support Services Projects: **20\***

Student Support Services STEM Projects: **1\***

Talent Search Projects: **11\***

Upward Bound Projects: **14**

Upward Bound Math & Science Projects: **5\***

Veterans Upward Bound Projects: **1**

Total Funding for Massachusetts Projects: **\$20,288,006.00**

\*Indicates projects at MWCC

(Adapted from "The Urgency of Now" Council for Opportunity in Education 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Policy Seminar "TRIO Fact Sheet" and TRIO Projects by State FY2017 Handout)

*Join us in celebrating*

## First Generation Day November 8, 2018

Watch your email for ways you can be involved!

## Student Spotlight: Cassparina Carlson

By Dawn Babineau

Visions Learning Specialist

Most days it seems like Cassparina (Cassie) Carlson is everywhere and involved in everything! Chances are good that you have probably already met her in some capacity while here on campus. If you haven't had the opportunity yet to cross paths with her, she is someone who you can easily approach, say hello and leave feeling like you have known each other a lifetime. She is one of the most genuine and non-judgmental persons I have ever met. She has firm goals, strong motivation and is surely going places in her life and career.

**Career Goals:** To complete her degree in Human Services here at MWCC and continue schooling to earn a Master of Science in Social Work degree. She is still trying to identify exactly what she wants to do, but knows it probably involves working with people in their late teens/ early adulthood, in a counseling role that has a positive impact on the community.

**Motivation to Attend College:** Cassie had been working in a retail position. She was working a million hours a week with little to show. Life was a delicate balance between herself and her children's father to cover all of the family responsibilities. When he passed away, the delicate balance was fractured, and schedules and routines became chaotic. Out of necessity of her

employment, she often found herself missing out on family happenings. Eventually, fear for the direction her life was taking became her motivator for change. She shares that one of the scariest times in her life was the day she quit her job to go back to school. Going back to school was in many ways an opportunity to reclaim control of her life.

**Unexpected Benefits of Being a College Student:** Cassie was pleasantly surprised by how much she loved being a college student, especially because she had been so fearful about taking the first step. She thought she might be the only non-traditional student in class but quickly found her classes were filled with students of all ages. She enjoys the diversity of the life experiences she encounters.

**Student Challenges:** Sometimes, if she has a big paper due, she still might need to miss a family event, but the end goal is different so it makes the sacrifices more manageable. She has learned to bring her schoolwork with her everywhere so she can read a few chapters while waiting to pick up kids.

**Benefits of Being a Visions Student:** Cassie credits the Visions Program with being a big reason she is still here. She has been involved with



the Leader in Me series, she takes advantage of tutoring and is pretty much a regular fixture around the Trio Complex. She credits the program with making her feel more confident and open minded.

**Clubs and Activities:** President of Human Services club. Member of Veterans Club. Work study for Student Life. Cassie is part of the iConnect test team and has also been selected to represent MWCC at the upcoming Student Representative Debate for the next Congressional seat. She is an active member of the Visions Program.

**Advice she has for other students:** USE YOUR RESOURCES! Ask questions. Ask for help. Try to stay ahead of assignments. Remember to network. Get to know your professors and let them get to know you. Trust your academic advisors. Believe in yourself and have confidence. Do not give up.

**Most Important:** Say "Hello" to her if you see her in the hallways!



### Meet Emma Lynch

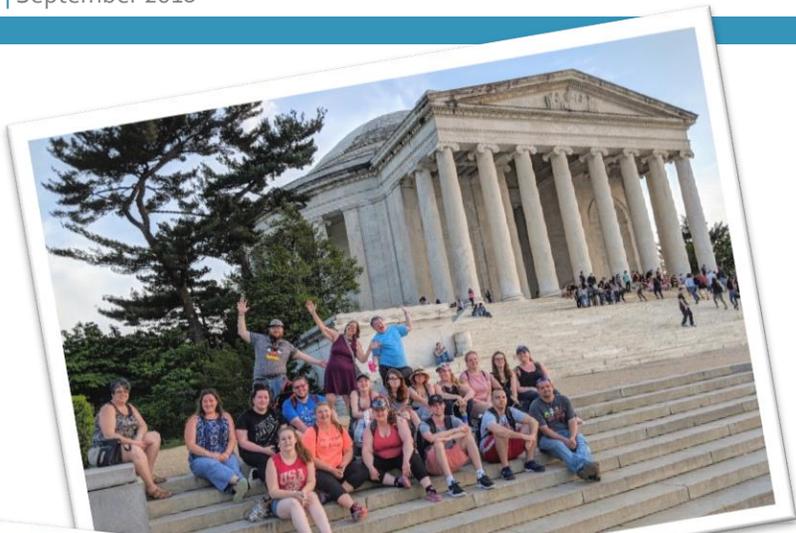
*Visions Academic Advisor*

Emma is excited to be the new Academic Advisor in the Visions Program. She has a BA in Psychology from UMass Amherst and an MA in International Education from SIT Graduate Institute. She has experience in home care administration, human resources, and more recently, study abroad advising. In her free time, she likes practicing Spanish, watching movies, exploring new places, and kayaking. She is very much looking forward to helping Visions students reach their potential!

**Emma will be available from 1:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday.**

# TRIO Takes D.C.

In May, eighteen students along with Gaurav, Paula and Joyce visited Washington D.C. This trip included a college tour at George Washington University, a tour of the National Mall as well as a trip to the Capitol. During this four-day trip, not only did students and staff learn about the history and culture of Washington D.C. and its influence in modern-day America, but they also formed friendships that will last a lifetime.



## Start Smart with Your Check-In

Complete your semester check-in during the first two weeks of the semester to maximize your success.

## Meet Your TRIO Community at the Fall Kick-Off

### Visions Program Kick-Off Lunch

Thursday, September 6, 2018  
12:30-1:30 p.m.  
North Café

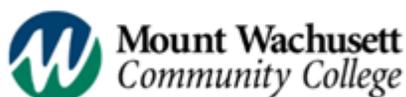
### Rx Program Kick-Off Lunch

Tuesday, September 11, 2018  
12:30-1:30 p.m.  
North Café

## Free Passes to the MWCC Fitness Center!

The Rx and Visions Programs have a limited number of free passes to the MWCC Fitness Center. These memberships include access to fitness equipment, classes and more!

If you are interested, please stop by the TRIO Complex by September 14<sup>th</sup>!



444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000

## Fall Semester Checklist

- ✓ **Buy/Rent textbooks** and gather school supplies
- ✓ Attend and **participate in all classes**
- ✓ **Check-in with your Rx or Visions advisor**
- ✓ Attend your program **Kick-Off Lunch**
- ✓ **Schedule tutoring**
- ✓ Attend at least **one seminar**
- ✓ Read the weekly **eletter**
- ✓ **Check your email daily**

September 2018 Calendar of Events							Check your email daily for the most up-to-date information on program events and campus news
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
						1	
2	3 <b>Labor Day</b> No classes all campuses, day and evening	4 <b>Full Semester &amp; Cycle 1</b> Classes Begin	5	6 <b>Visions Program Kick-Off Lunch</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Café	7	8	
9	10 <b>Full Semester &amp; Cycle 1</b> Last Day to add classes and drop classes with 100% refund	11 <b>Rx Program Kick-Off Lunch</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Café	12	13	14	15	
16	17 <b>MyMathLab Workshop</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 256 <b>Full Semester &amp; Cycle 1</b> Last day to withdraw with 50% refund	18 <b>BlackBoard, Gmail &amp; Google Docs Workshop</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 250	19 <b>Read, Write, Gold</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 250 <b>Get the Scoop on TRIO</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. TRIO Complex	20 <b>How to Ace English 101</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM W11 <b>Get the Scoop on TRIO</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. TRIO Complex	21	22	
23	24 <b>TEAS Seminar</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM W11	25 <b>Transfer Seminar-All Majors</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 202	26	27	28 <b>Transfer Trip to Fitchburg State University</b> Sign up in the TRIO Complex	29	
30							
<p>If you have a disability and require accommodation in order to participate fully in program activities, please contact the Program Director to discuss your specific needs. Affirmative Action/ Equal Opportunity Institution</p>							