

TRiO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

November & December 2018

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

IN THIS ISSUE

Year-End Edition

by Gaurav Khanna,

Director of the Visions and Rx Programs

As the leaves change color and disappear, we enter the final stretch of the fall semester. However, that doesn't mean that you can ease up. There is much to be done between now and finals!

FAFSA: The submission window for the 2019-2020 year is already open as of October 1! If you haven't already submitted your FAFSA for next year, make sure you get on it! If you need help filing, let us know. We have a couple of open labs and can also work with you one on one. Watch your email for more information.

Registration: Registration for winter intersession and spring classes begins on November 1! The first week of registration is only available to current students so YOU have priority for the classes you need for next semester. Make full use of this window to register and get the schedule you want before new students start filling up classes later in the month. See page 2 for details.

Make a plan for finals: Now is the time to map out the rest of the semester. Take a look at the work you need to do for all your classes and set aside time so that you can complete it in a timely fashion before due dates come up.

Seek support: Remember we have tutors who can help you polish and improve your written work, but they need time to do that! Plan for a few extra days for the review process, especially if you do not have a standing tutoring appointment.

Reflect and give thanks: Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday of the year because it provides the opportunity to reflect on so much that we have to be grateful for in our lives. Take some time to identify the positives in your life and connect and nourish your connections with your support system.

Finals and the end of the semester will be here before you know it. Let us help you in any way that we can. Whether it's via phone, email, text, or just old-fashioned walking through the door, we're here for you!



Steps to Registration

Catherine provides a step-by-step description of registering for spring 2019 classes on p. 2.



Success Strategies

Learn tips that will help you complete your semester on p. 3.



Student Spotlight

Read Kevin's story and learn about his journey to MWCC on p. 6.



Simon Says—Register!

by Catherine Maddox-Wiley
Rx Retention Specialist

Okay, so we aren't seven years old anymore. You have to admit, however, Simon's advice in this case is worth following.

Spring Registration begins on Thursday, November 1. To get the best seats in the house, I mean, classroom, you should be ready to choose your spring semester courses. Ready to play, I mean, prepare? **Simon Says:**

Use Degree Works

- Review Degree Works to determine the courses you need.
- You can also see the course listings in Degree Works.

Review Course Listings

- If you prefer, go to iConnect to review the course listings for spring.
- Create a draft of your spring schedule. Be sure to write down the CRNs.

Make an Appointment with Your Advisor

- Meet with your Visions or Rx advisor to discuss your choices.
- Sign up sheets for these appointments are posted on their doors.

Register through WebConnect

- The process begins on Thursday, November 1.
- If you need help, attend the TRIO Open Registration Labs on Thursday, November 1 (Room 250) or Monday, November 5 (Room 256). 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.
- You can also stop by the TRIO Office for one-on-one assistance.

Check Your Financial Aid and Bill

- Go to your WebConnect page to check your spring financial aid and bill.
- Will your bill and books be covered?

Simon Says...

- Bravo!

End of Semester Success Strategies

by Emma Lynch
Visions Academic Advisor

It's time to end the semester on a strong note! While finals might seem overwhelming, follow these five steps and learn to tackle the end of the semester with ease.

Step 1: Plan & Prioritize

Do you have a planner? Even if it's been on the floor since you first brought it home, now is the time to pick it up. (If you've been using it all along, great!) A good planner is one that you use. If using a planner isn't normally your thing, it's still a good strategy to map out due dates for assignments. Do it now and look at the bigger picture. Are the deadlines across all your classes clumped together? Then, take into consideration anything else that takes up your time. Do you work? Do you take care of children, parents, or pets? Prioritize time in your schedule when you will study or write final papers in the month (or more) before the deadlines arrive. Reach out now to people who can help with childcare, etc., so you will have it in place when you need it. Use different colored pens or post-it notes to highlight this time in your planner or whatever you use. Stick to your plan to keep yourself from doing it all last minute.

Step 2: Dealing with Distractions

This is going to be hard, but put your phone on silent, turn off notifications, and stuff it into a drawer if you have to. If

TV is your problem, unplug it from the wall. Consider a change of scenery, too, like going to the library instead of your living room. Whatever "it" is, take one action that will make it a little harder or more inconvenient for it to be a distraction. Once all the devices are no longer lighting up, consider using the website version of apps like Noisli that provide a soothing background noise (gentle rain, crackling fireplaces, and more) to help your mind drown out everything else and focus on your studying. Don't listen to anything with lyrics, though, that can be distracting too!

Step 3: Take Breaks

Now that you've mapped out all of your studying in the month before finals, remember to take breaks once you begin to sit down and crack open your books. One general guideline is to get up and walk around for 10 minutes for every hour. Don't sit for hours on end without shaking things up a bit, and definitely don't aim to study for four hours or more at a time, even with short breaks. After hitting any milestone, like learning 40 flashcards, take a break and get yourself a candy bar to reward yourself. You won't be able to retain the same amount of information if you do not take breaks.

Step 4: Take Care of Yourself

Finals are stressful, and you might notice that it's common for everyone to talk

about not getting enough sleep. But, you know what's cooler than talking about not getting enough sleep? Actually getting enough sleep! I know it can be a wild thought, but you deserve to take care of yourself, too. Look back at Step 1 and make sure you left room for a good night's sleep. You could also block off one afternoon to go window shopping for shoes that look like socks (à la Cardi B), or build your dream car on BMW's website (but don't actually buy things—Rx Transfer Counselor Alaina wrote a column on frugal living, check that out!). Maybe sing your favorite song at the top of your lungs, or exercise—take advantage of that Mount Fitness membership if you have one! I cannot say this enough: College is hard work and you deserve to take care of yourself, too.

Step 5: Ask Questions

Sometimes asking questions is like asking for directions; you would rather not do it. However, finals aren't the time to let anything get in your way. Use the support systems around you, such as your professors and the TRIO staff. If you are uncertain about what is expected to be on your finals, reach out for better understanding. Your professors will continue to hold office hours, and you can always ask about tutoring in the TRIO Complex, at the library, or on-line.

You've got the basic steps, now you can take control before finals come! Remember what works for you, what your learning style is, and incorporate it into everything you do.

New FAFSA App: Filing your FAFSA just got easier!

by Stephanie Giguere
Visions Professional Writing Tutor

It's that time of year again: pumpkins, cooler temps, apple picking. Fall is also time to fill out the 2019/2020 FAFSA. But don't worry! This year it will be easier and more convenient to fill out your FAFSA using the Department of Education's new smartphone app.



The **My Student Aid** app is now available for download from the Apple app store and Google Play. Test users say that it's user-friendly and easy to navigate. After logging into My Student Aid using your FAFSA ID, you can start, finish, or submit the FAFSA form. You can also print your SAR, update your

information, and check if your school received your FAFSA. Other features of the app include a link to the IRS data retrieval tool, and a tool comparing aid packages between different schools. Soon, you'll be able to do even more on the app, such as check account balances, accept or decline loans, and even pay student loans.

Please still see us in the TRIO Complex if you have any questions about filling out the FAFSA.

Apps for Student Success

by Amy Moury

Rx Professional Math Tutor

Technology is a huge part of our everyday lives. We now carry cell phones everywhere we go and use them in many applications. But are you using your smart phone to be the best student possible? Here are five great and FREE apps you should download today to improve your own performance in your classes. All are available for iPhone and Android.

1. Do you struggle with organization and time management?



Then download

myHomework Student Planner.

This online agenda will keep track of your homework assignments and classes times, send you reminders about due dates, and allow you to check off things on your to-do list as you complete them! If carrying an actual agenda is difficult, try this app to improve your organizational skills.

2. Do you study best using flashcards? Then download **Quizlet**. With Quizlet, you can study on the go! Create your own flashcards or use one of the thousands of sets already created, and access them wherever you are. Use those extra 10 minutes waiting for the bus or at the doctor's office wisely. Pull out your phone, open your flashcards, and quiz yourself.



3. Do you have so many papers and readings and don't know what to do with them? Then download **Evernote**. This app allows you to organize the many readings and notes you get from professors. You can add PDFs, screenshots, images, even audio notes.



Then organize by class or subject and add tags so you can easily find the information. You could also create a

notebook and collaborate with other students to get a more complete account of a class's lectures.

4. Do you want to watch videos about different topics? Then download **KhanAcademy**.



Their motto is "You can learn anything. For free. For everyone. Forever." It is a comprehensive learning website covering math from elementary school to multivariable calculus, science, history, economics, and more. The videos are easy to follow, and you can watch them at your own pace. This is a wonderful resource to use in addition to My Math/Stat Lab.

This list is certainly not a comprehensive one of all apps available to improve your educational success. Consider searching for MWCC iConnect, Blackboard, a dictionary, a scientific calculator, a voice recorder, textbook rental, or FAFSA. If you find a great app that you want to share, please visit us in the TRIO Complex, and we'll pass it along!

TRIO Leaders Program Spring 2019

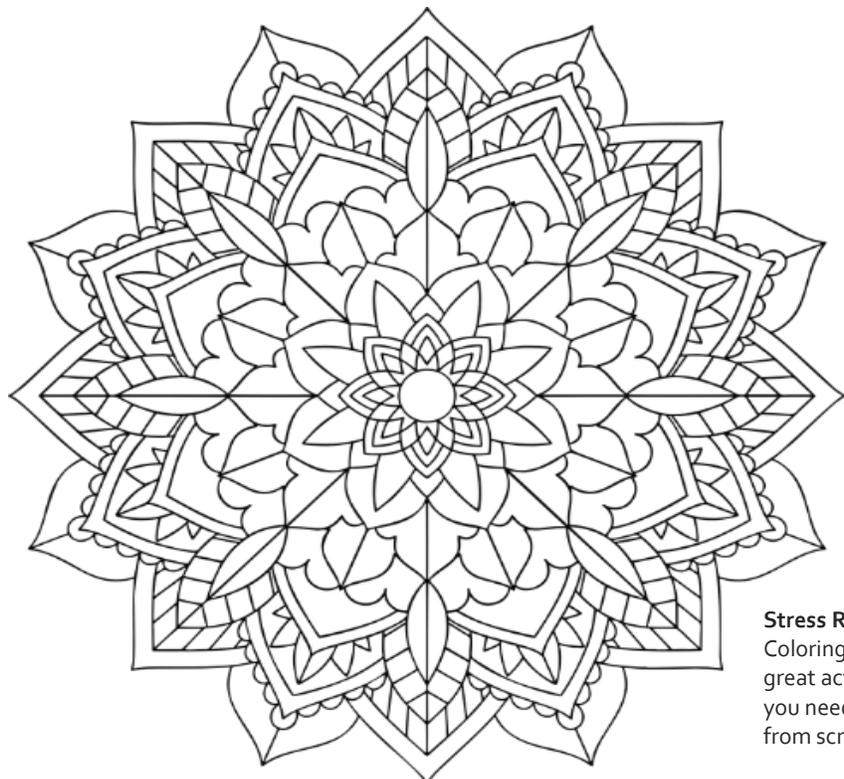
Join a small team of motivated, enthusiastic students who are committed to meeting for eight sessions in the spring semester.

Develop new skills and perspectives.

Learn to become an effective leader and presenter.

Lead the Mid-Semester Gatherings in March.

Watch your email for more information about applying for this great opportunity!



Stress Relief Tip: Coloring can be a great activity when you need a break from screen-time.

MWCC Celebrates First Generation Day

On Thursday, November 8, 2018, MWCC will join colleges and universities from across the country in the First-Generation College Celebration. Sponsored by the Council for Opportunity in Education and Center for First-generation Student Success, the day marks the 53rd anniversary of the signing of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 and celebrates the opportunities available to first-generation college students.

Join the MWCC community in recognizing the success of first-generation college students!

Jason Zelesky
Dean of Students



As a first generation, low income college student myself, I can personally speak to the transformative impact that programs like TRIO have on students. TRIO builds a strong support network of mentors, peers and resources that help students foster a sense of purpose and ensure personal and academic success. TRIO changes lives – students are given the unique opportunity to learn and grow in a supportive, empowering and resource-rich environment. The programs at MWCC have built a strong reputation for helping our students navigate college while building a career and educational pathway that will change the trajectory of their lives forever.



ROUGHLY 65 PERCENT OF
MWCC STUDENTS COME
FROM FIRST-GENERATION
BACKGROUNDS.

First Generation Day in the TRIO Complex

Stop by the TRIO Complex on November 8 for fun activities and treats!



Hot Chocolate will be served around the college!

First Generation Day Celebration Panel Discussion

Thursday, November 8
12:30-1:30 p.m.
Multipurpose Room (RM 115)

Hear faculty, staff and students share their stories as they have overcome obstacles to achieve their goals!



Visit the TRIO SSS 50th Anniversary exhibit in the display case across from the library to learn more about how TRIO grants have supported first-generation college students in reaching their goals!

Student Spotlight: Kevin Theriault

By Todd Bennett

Visions Transfer Counselor

Kevin previously led a pretty normal life. He had a good job as a web developer working for a publishing company. He went to work and lived with his girlfriend and raised their two boys (who are now 13 and 11). His life changed significantly when he developed significant back pain. The pain led to multiple back surgeries and prescriptions for medications to help manage the pain. The medications led to addiction which negatively impacted Kevin's employment and relationships.

Kevin is here at Mount Wachusett Community College rebuilding his life from square one. He brings all of his strengths, including a great deal of motivation, intellectual curiosity, a life-long passion and interest in IT, a continued dedication to being a father to his two boys, and two years of sobriety.

Kevin's original goal was to refresh his skills and to complete the cyber

security certificate. He was hopeful that this academic refresher would help him get a job in the IT field so he could work in the area that interests him and earn a sufficient income to provide more opportunities for his two children.

Having worked with Kevin, I can testify to his incredible motivation and attention to detail. His strong effort paid off, and he earned a 3.92GPA in his first semester. He completed his cybersecurity certificate and is now planning to complete the CIS degree which he will finish in May, 2019. Kevin was on the President's List in the spring of 2018, and he has not earned a grade below A-. He has an outstanding 3.97 GPA. Kevin is now contemplating transferring to complete a bachelor's degree.

Kevin has also taken an active role in the Visions Program. He always completes his check-ins, reviews four-week assessments, and meets with his



advisors often to discuss life, classes, career, and transfer. He utilizes tutoring for support. Kevin participated in the TRIO Washington, D.C. trip in May 2018 and was awarded the Visions Progress Award and the Visions scholarship. Kevin has referred several students to the Visions and Rx Programs and provided support to peers in his courses as well.

Kevin has demonstrated what is possible with consistent hard work and determination. Keep up the great work Kevin!

Gathering Together

The Visions and Rx Programs celebrated the mid-semester season with lunch and great activities. Todd led the Visions students in writing 6-word stories inspired by Ernest Hemingway. Alaina encouraged the Rx students in learning about the things that they have in common. Students eagerly shared their insights at both gatherings.



TRIO SSS End of Semester Gathering

Tuesday, December 4
12:30-1:30 p.m.
South Café

Join the Visions & Rx staff in celebrating the end of the semester!

Pizza, salad, prizes and fun!

Frugal Spending during the Holidays

By Alaina Lucchetti

Rx Transfer Counselor

The holidays are meant to be a joyous occasion where we set aside time to spend with loved ones, eat delicious holiday cuisine, and bask in the joy of gift giving. For many of us though, the holidays can become a source of stress and put us into a financial panic.

There is a lot more to the holidays than gift-giving. This time of year brings celebrations with friends and family, holiday parties, and the desire to donate to those less fortunate. Just as you would for class, clinical, or an internship, it is important to *plan, plan, and plan some more!*

Start by organizing all of your priorities. While it would be nice to attend every party and give a gift to everyone in our lives, that is not always possible – nor should it be the expectation!

Create a list of all of the people in your life you will be giving gifts to this year. Take your time and be thorough in your list. Nothing will set you into a panic more quickly than remembering you forgot to get a loved one a gift at the last minute. Remember, just because you gave someone a gift (or they to you) last year, does not mean the tradition needs to carry on this year.

Take a good hard look at what your budget will allow for gift-giving and allot a set amount for each person and/or organization on your list. This will give you some guidance as you check off your shopping list upon entering the chaos that is any shopping mall during the holiday craze.

Still feeling like your list does not include everyone you wish you could give to? Consider the more affordable and personal alternative of a homemade



present which can range from fresh baked goods to a personalized ornament or maybe a knitted scarf. This can be a more cost effective way to gift-giving and may allow you to reach more people on your list!

While adjusting your gift-giving habits is one way to save money, there are many other ways to keep money in your pocket this holiday season.

Please join us on Tuesday, November 27 for our **Frugal Living for the Holidays** seminar at 12:30 p.m. in W11.



FAFSA Day in the TRIO Complex

Friday, December 7, 2018
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Stop by the TRIO Complex and complete your 2019-2020 FAFSA

You can also schedule a one-on-one appointment with a Visions or Rx counselor.

Watch your email for information on what you'll need to complete your FAFSA.

File your FAFSA by April 1 to maximize your financial aid award.

A friendly REMINDER from TRIO!



What is REMIND?

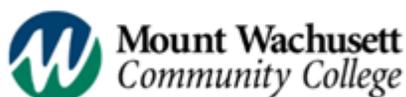
Remind is a program that will send you a text message to inform (remind©) you about important upcoming TRIO events.

Why?

We recognize that texting is a great form of communication and we don't want you to miss out on scholarship opportunities, upcoming trips, and program events.

Do I need to sign up?

No, you do not need to do anything. We have used this program before and received great feedback from students so we decided to roll it out to all Visions and RX students. We think that you will find it helpful. You will receive a message from us on November 1st. This message will include an option to cancel this service. Be sure to keep your contact information current. You can update your information on WebConnect, or stop in our office to fill out a form.



444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000

End of Semester Checklist

- ✓ Study for exams
- ✓ Finish papers & projects
- ✓ Eat & sleep well
- ✓ Connect with friends & classmates
- ✓ Register for Spring 2019 (or let your TRIO advisor know your plans!)
- ✓ Check your email daily

November/December 2018 List of Important Dates

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

<i>Thursday, November 1- Friday, November 9</i>	Priority Registration for Continuing Students	<i>Monday, December 3</i>	Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw
<i>Thursday, November 1</i>	Spring 2019 Registration Open Lab 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room 250	<i>Tuesday, December 4</i>	End of the Semester Gathering 12:30-1:30 p.m. South Café
<i>Monday, November 5</i>	Spring 2019 Registration Open Lab 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room 256	<i>Friday, December 7</i>	TRIO FAFSA Friday All day, TRIO Complex
<i>Tuesday, November 6</i>	Cycle 2: Last day to add classes and drop classes with 100% refund Investing in Stocks Workshop 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room W11	<i>Tuesday, December 11</i>	Saving on Textbooks Workshop 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room 202
<i>Thursday, November 8</i>	Full semester: Last day to withdraw First Generation Day Activity All Day: TRIO Complex	<i>Monday, December 17- Thursday, December 20</i>	Fuel for Finals All day, TRIO Complex
<i>Monday, November 12</i>	Veterans Day celebrated: No classes all campuses, day and evening Transfer Trip to Smith College: See Alaina or Todd for more information	<i>Saturday, December 22</i>	Full Semester & Cycle 2: Last day of classes
<i>Tuesday, November 13</i>	Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw with a 50% refund Transfer Seminar: Healthcare Majors 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room 202	<i>Monday, December 24, Tuesday, December 25, Monday, December 31, Tuesday, January 1</i>	MWCC Closed
<i>Wednesday, November 21</i>	Monday schedule for all day classes all campuses (no evening classes)		
<i>Thursday, November 22- Saturday, November 24</i>	Thanksgiving Holiday: No classes all campuses, day and evening		
<i>Tuesday, November 27</i>	Frugal Living for the Holidays 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room W11		
<p>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</p>			