

# TRiO

---

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

# January & February 2019

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

IN THIS ISSUE

## “Healthy” New Year!

by Gaurav Khanna,  
Director of the Visions and Rx Programs

After a quick break, it's great to see all of you back for the Spring 2019 semester. Even though it seems cold and bleak outside, spring is just around the corner. When you see snowflakes coming down, remember that the days are already getting longer!

In the meantime, let us help you get started on a bright note for this semester. Your being here is a demonstration of your commitment to achieving academic success—so put yourself in the best position to do so. Our newsletter this month deals with the theme of a healthy mind in a healthy body. Articles cover academic, financial, physical and other forms of health as well as a great write up on one of our new students, Lisa McMaster.

As always, we expect to see all of you in the first two weeks of classes to do your semester check-in. These few minutes set the foundation for success—making sure you are connected with the

resources and information you need for your classes.

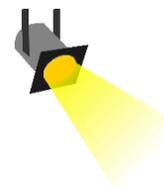
This semester we are excited to again offer an interview and dining etiquette workshop to help you prepare for professional opportunities beyond college. We will have etiquette expert Carol McGuigan present the workshop and a three course lunch will be included. Look for more information and sign up details in a few weeks.

Lastly, the one constant in life is change and that also holds true for our programs. This semester, Todd Bennett will be leaving us to take another position in NH. We hope to conduct a speedy search for his replacement and have somebody in his role as soon as possible. In the meantime, please reach out to any of the other counseling staff and we will do our best to assist you. The rest of the staff will be here as always to offer all the support that we can. Connect with us and help us help you!



### Start Your Year Right!

January is a great time to set goals and develop good habits!



### Student Spotlight

Lisa McMaster shares her education and her path to success!



# Academic Health: How to Start Off the Semester Right!

by Amy Moury

Rx Professional Math Tutor

It's a new year, and it's a great time to start new habits. How should you prepare for a new semester? Use the list below to ensure you will meet your goals!

## PREPARE

1. Set your goals for the semester. Keep those goals in mind every week as the semester progresses.
2. Check in with an advisor to confirm your course load meets your educational goals. If your situation has changed since last semester, this is especially important!
3. Buy any required textbooks, access codes, and supplies. Seek out other options like renting, borrowing, or online versions.

## PLAN

1. Use an agenda, whether it be virtual, mobile, or a physical one. This will help you visualize your time and all responsibilities.
2. Write down all important dates including exam dates, due dates of papers/projects, MWCC academic calendar, work schedule, etc. If 2 exams end up in the same week, it won't be a surprise to you when it actually happens.
3. Create a realistic study routine that you can maintain for the entire semester. Don't forget to plan for study breaks!

4. Make sure your class schedule works with employment, transportation, and child care and that you have back up plans. Plan for the unexpected.

## PARTICIPATE

1. Attend every meeting of every class. By having perfect attendance, you will hear all of the important information, all of the "this will be on the test" comments, and all of the content presented to you.
2. Be fully present by putting the phone away, being engaged, taking notes, recording the class, and asking questions. Show your professor that this class is important to you.
3. Find a classmate with whom you can study effectively. This person should have similar study habits or ones that complement yours, and both of you should benefit from the experience.
4. Seek out opportunities in the MWCC community to enrich your education. There are numerous clubs, groups, and ways to be involved.

## PRIORITIZE

1. Be on time for all classes. Walking in late is distracting to other

students, and you will miss valuable class time.

2. Fully complete all assignments on time. Your final grade literally depends on it!
3. Eat healthy, get enough sleep, and stay active. Take care of your body so it can function.
4. Take time for yourself to rest and recharge. Finding a balance of work and play is incredibly important.

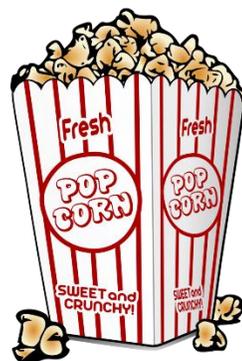
## PRACTICE

1. Put all of these suggestions into practice. Be fully committed to your education in every way.
2. Continue working hard every day until the end of the semester. Every week, every class, and every assignment count.
3. Challenge yourself to learn new things. Education is a lifelong pursuit. There is so much to discover!

Each semester brings its own challenges, but you are capable of rising up and meeting the challenges. Keep a positive attitude. Start preparing for your final exams from day one. Use the resources in TRIO to support you along the way. **YOU'VE GOT THIS!**

## Time Management Tip:

When scheduling time for work or for class, also schedule time for yourself, such as time at the gym or time spent with friends and family.



## “Pop” Into TRIO

Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup>  
12:30-1:30 p.m.  
TRIO Complex (RM134)

Bring a friend, stop in, and get a treat.

If you know an MWCC student who would benefit from the Visions and Rx Programs, bring them along!

# Interview Skills? What are those?

By Emma Lynch

Visions Academic Advisor

Believe it or not, the act of interviewing for a job is a skill, and one that takes time and practice to learn. But, what exactly are interview skills? An easy way to learn and become familiar with them is to think of your job as a student as practice for future employment.

## Preparation

Don't wing it. Just as you shouldn't wait until the last minute to study for a test, you shouldn't wait to prepare for an interview. Once you accept an interview, review the job description and your resume/cover letter. Think of questions you might be asked that address the tasks involved, or google interview questions for that type of position or industry, and prepare your answers. Also be prepared to be interviewed by more than one person; it's more common than people realize!

## Look presentable

You want to convey your professionalism with the outfit you wear, so choose clothes that are in good condition, neat (not wrinkly), and clean. If you know the atmosphere of the company, you may want to consider dressing more business casual than business formal. Being presentable also means conveying your enthusiasm for the job, so make sure you rest the night before and have the energy to carry you through the conversation.

## Kindness

Ever hear of that person who rudely cut someone off on a train to get to an interview on time and then later discovered the person they cut off was the hiring manager at the interview? Don't be that person. Be kind to everyone. Even the smallest interaction with the HR professional or receptionist can have an impact. Don't think this is a skill? Think again about that person who cut someone off. This says a lot

about how you may treat future clients or coworkers.

## Punctuality

Whether you're going to an in-person interview or having a phone or video interview, punctuality demonstrates your respect for other people's time. Don't be afraid to ask the person arranging the interview where to park or if you have to sign in somewhere. Aim to be at the interview 10-15 minutes early; otherwise, you're late.

## Pausing

You might get stumped by a question, and that's okay! Knowing how to pause means being comfortable with asking for clarification or for the question to be repeated. You can also say something like, "That's a great question!" to give yourself a moment to gather your thoughts. Whatever you do, don't stare blankly in silence or mumble incoherently.

## Speak clearly

Communication skills are so important in today's world, when miscommunication can be costly. Demonstrate in the interview that you are excellent at getting the point across. In situations where you're interviewed multiple times (video interview, then phone, then in-person, for example), you may find yourself repeating answers to the same questions, so know how to answer clearly and concisely.

## No negativity

Even if you think your last boss was the devil himself, don't say it. You may be asked questions that drive you to give a negative answer, but always know how to put a positive spin on it. This shows that you have a great attitude, even in difficult situations.

## Listen

It can be so easy to be nervous and go blank after giving an answer, but work hard at listening and you can often find points of interest to follow up on and create a natural flow of conversation. Showing that you're paying attention and following up on what your interviewer is saying is impressive, and creating a conversational atmosphere is a lot more fun than experiencing a straightforward question and answer interview.

## Ask questions

You need to get to know your future employer just as much as they need to get to know you. Ask detailed questions about the job, the benefits, the environment, or anything that just isn't clear to you. It shows you care about the position and you want this to be a good fit just as much as they do.

## Say thank you!!

It's common nowadays to follow up your interview with an email thank you note within 24 hours. Without it, the interviewer may believe that you do not want to pursue the position out of genuine interest. If you want to go the extra mile and really make an impression, send a written thank you note via snail mail!

What do you think? Do you see yourself needing to use these skills as a student? If the goal of your job as a student was to get a job at MWCC after graduation, would you be hired?

### Want to learn more about important career topics?

In March, we have planned several events that will help you in your career development.

Read your March newsletter and check your email for the most up-to-date information regarding program events and opportunities

# Improving your Physical Health

By Stephanie Giguere

Visions Professional Writing Tutor

Did you set a New Year's Resolution? Was your New Year's Resolution about physical health? According to Statista (2018), almost half of all American's New Year's Resolutions are to "lose weight or get in shape." Unfortunately, many people spend money on gym memberships and expensive diet supplements, only to stop just a few months into the year.

Here are some free, easy-to-stick-to New Year's resolutions that will improve your physical health:

## Go for a daily walk

A daily ten minute walk can help you lose weight, strengthen muscles, increase bone density, and improve your mood. Many studies have shown that walking in nature can greatly reduce stress and develop overall health.

## Drink more water

Increasing your daily water intake has many benefits. Many people don't realize that they don't drink enough water. Water fuels brain function, digestion, and metabolism. Drinking more water can help you lose weight, feel more awake, and be more alert. WEBMD recommends that most people drink half an ounce to one ounce of water for each pound they weigh. So, if you weigh 150 pounds, you should drink between 75 to 150 ounces of water a day.

## Drink less alcohol

There are more calories in alcohol and alcoholic drinks than you might expect. Cutting back on alcohol can be an easy way to cut calories and help you lose weight. You could also experience many other benefits, such as more

sound sleep, healthier skin, and less stress. You'll also save money by buying less alcohol!

## Sleep more, or more regularly

Sleep is a vital component of physical health. Sleep gives the body an opportunity to repair itself, for the brain to process memories, and for hormone regulation. Healthy adults should sleep about seven to nine hours a night. This year, try your best to set a regular sleep schedule. Set an approximate bed time that doesn't change drastically from weeknights to weekends, and make sleep a priority.

Even if you choose just one of these resolutions, you can make a positive change in 2019. Cheers to a healthy and happy new year!

# Build Your Financial Empowerment

By Joyce Kulig

Visions Retention

We talk a lot about financial education and financial literacy. Many of us know the terms and may have an understanding of what we need to do. Keep track of what you spent, spend less than you make, have an emergency fund, be careful with credit cards and so on. However, do we understand the importance of using these concepts to strengthen our ability to manage money? Do we seek out financial services to help us? Financial empowerment is knowledge and putting our knowledge into action is important.

## Money concepts that help us empower our financial future:

- healthy spending
- a savings plan
- investments
- loan management

- understanding credit and protecting your personal information
- retirement planning

## Putting our knowledge into action requires:

- having a positive attitude
- staying motivated
- keeping realistic expectations

## Seek advice from:

- financial institutions
- reputable Websites or
- workshops that can build your financial literacy skills

The bottom line is: What you want for your financial future is to take control now and empower yourself!

Be sure to check out the financial literacy workshops offered on campus this semester!

## Free Passes to Mount Fitness

The Rx and Visions Programs have a limited number of free passes to Mount Fitness.

Students must complete their semester check-in to be eligible for a free membership.

If you are interested, please stop by the TRIO Complex by February 1.

# Connect with Your Dreams by Creating a Vision Board

By Mary Roth

Visions Professional Writing Tutor

The New Year offers us an opportunity to reflect on where we have been, what we have accomplished and where we hope to be in the future. This can be exciting for some people, but for many people, setting goals and achieving them can be stressful. If the idea of committing to a course of action through making resolutions is overwhelming, a vision board offers an innovative way of exploring and setting personal goals—and best of all, it is fun and creative!

To create a vision board, you will need some inexpensive materials that you probably have in your home. You will need a large, heavy gauge piece of paper, such as a poster board, recycled magazines, scissors and some type of adhesive, such as glue sticks or glue dots. You will also need a work space that will accommodate these items. Finally, you will need to set aside time to work on this in a focused way.

To begin, assemble your materials. Next, take some time to explore the magazines you have collected. Without any particular goal in mind, flip through the pages of the magazine. As you explore the magazines, pay attention to any photographs, titles or words that catch your eye. As you

discover these items, tear them out of the magazine. Don't worry about how these will all fit together until later. The point of this step is to collect images and words that appeal to you. You may not even know why these items appeal to you, but follow your instincts at this step. It is important at this stage to suspend judgement about the items you are collecting.

When you have collected a comfortable number of images and words, take a few minutes to view them and sort through them. Set aside any words or images that do not appeal to you.

Beginning with the items that you like best, arrange them on the poster board. Do not glue them down yet. If you want to trim or manipulate the items after you have arranged them, do this before gluing the items to your board. You can overlap items, trim the board into a shape, write on the board, add glitter or whatever else makes this vision board a reflection of your Self.

When you have finished assembling your board, take a step back and consider the following:



- What does this collection of words and images tell me about who I am?
- What does it reveal about the kind of life I would like to create for myself and my family?
- Are there any unexpected or hidden goals that these images and words reflect?
- How do I feel about this creation?
- Without judging myself, how can I move toward the goals this vision board reflects?

To learn more about vision boards, join us for our Vision Board activity in the TRIO Complex this February. Watch your email for more information!

## Spring Transfer Tours

Our transfer counselors are excited to plan their spring tours of state and private four-year colleges and universities.

Connect with the Visions and Rx staff to discuss your career and educational goals. Let them know if you have a specific institution you are interested in visiting. We have taken Visions and Rx students to institutions all over New England!

Schedule your appointment today!

## 2019 Tour Dates

Wednesday, February 6  
**Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)**

Friday, February 15  
**Anna Maria College**

Wednesday, February 20  
**Amherst College**

Friday, March 1  
**UMASS Amherst**

Friday, March 15  
**Salem State University**

Friday, April 5  
**Worcester State University**

Friday, April 12  
**Fitchburg State University**

*If you are interested, please RSVP with the Visions and Rx staff.*

## Student Spotlight: Lisa McMaster

By Catherine Maddox-Wiley  
Rx Retention Specialist

No nonsense! This is the first impression one has of Lisa McMaster. When she asks questions, she makes it clear that she expects concrete answers; gray areas don't work for her. The second, or maybe third, okay fourth, impression one gets of Lisa is that her brand of no-nonsense also comes with a positive attitude and a good sense of humor. Knowing her life's journey is to have a deep respect for how she overcame adversity and how she approaches life.

Growing up, Lisa visited her grandparents in Massachusetts in the summer. She stayed out of trouble and played sports, specifically varsity softball and volleyball throughout high school. Her athletic skills earned her full-ride scholarships to Northeastern University and UMass-Lowell as well as Colgate University in New York. Lisa's parents had high expectations that she would seize the opportunity to attend college as the first in the family to do so; however, Lisa had her own ideas. Her middle-class family had a long lineage of military service. With the blend of wanting to forge her own path, to honor her family's military tradition, and to answer a calling to serve, Lisa became a 7<sup>th</sup> generation army enlistee at the age of 17.

With a long-time interest in the medical field, Lisa chose to train as a combat medic and later as a flight medic. After 10 weeks of basic training, she attended 16 weeks of Advanced Individual Training which is similar to EMT training but in a combat situation. Through this training, she became a certified paramedic. During her 10 years in the army, Lisa was stationed in the U.S. and Germany and served two tours, one in Kuwait and one in Iraq.

Tragedy struck in Iraq, however. Lisa was in a Humvee when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded, leaving her in a coma for a month. She suffered a frontal lobe brain injury as well as other injuries. After eight months of intensive in-patient rehabilitation at Walter Reed Hospital in Maryland, Lisa was medically discharged from the army. During the coma and rehab, Lisa had the added stresses of being separated from her three children and going through a divorce. After the medical discharge from the army, Lisa and her children moved to Massachusetts where she had extended family and support systems; she underwent continued intensive outpatient rehab for another year.

Once life was back on track, Lisa realized she missed being a paramedic and missed her life in the army. After a lengthy but full recovery, Lisa explored what it would take to get back into paramedic and underwent the 18-months of re-training for recertification.

After what she had been through, Lisa was surprised that her two eldest children pursued the military, the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force. With her children being more independent, Lisa wanted to occupy her time. Deciding that she was ready to attend college and get her degree, she came to MWCC in the fall. After being away from school for so long, Lisa, in good humor, admits that she did not do well on the Accuplacer test. Now that she is in classes, she has embraced college life and academics with great gusto!

Lisa recognizes the struggles of being older than most students. Math is not done the same! Essay-writing feels brand new! She knows that she must put



in the effort and has explored various learning styles to help her identify how she processes information, and she utilizes multiple study strategies. Lisa is a big fan of tutoring and college resources. With a tremendous focus on her academics, Lisa still makes time to be active with the Veteran's Club and Student Life. For Winter Fest, Lisa was one of the co-creators/designers of the beautiful wreath tribute to the Armed Services, winning first place for best wreath! In the spring, she will bring high energy to the TRIO Leadership Program as a participant.

Lisa's ultimate mission at MWCC is nursing with plans to transfer for a BSN. She continues to work as a paramedic with 12-hour shifts on weekend overnights, making sure to attend her 8am class on Monday mornings—after drinking a pot of coffee.

Let's close this article with words of wisdom from Lisa McMaster: Don't think you can't do it. Use the resources. Talk with your instructors. Get tutoring. Stay organized. Figure out your time management. Have fun.

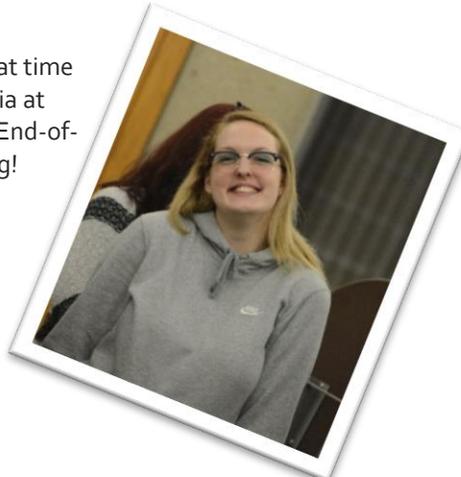
Told you so: No nonsense—with a smile!

# Snapshots:

## End-of-Semester Gathering



Students had a great time playing Winter Trivia at the Visions and Rx End-of-Semester Gathering!

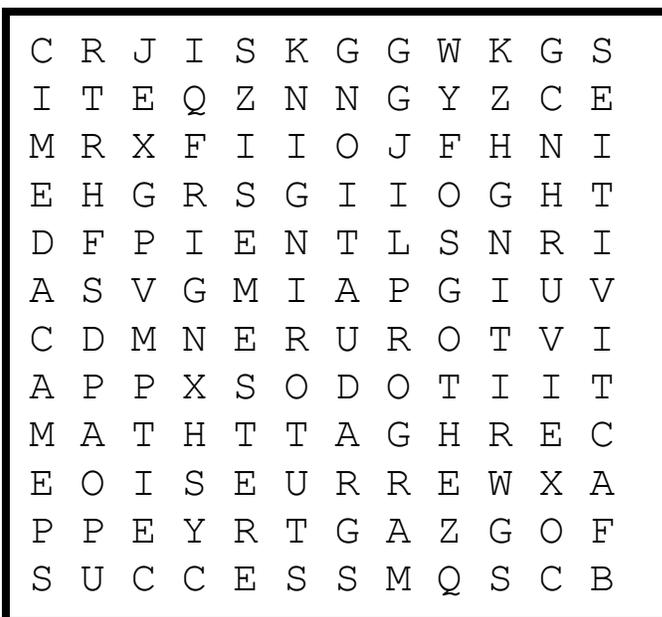


## Spring Semester Checklist

- ✓ **Check your class schedule** for changes to rooms or instructors.
- ✓ **Buy your books & supplies.**
- ✓ **Review your syllabus.**
- ✓ Log into BlackBoard and check out your course.
- ✓ **Come in for your Check-in during the first two weeks.**
- ✓ Check your email daily!

## Spring Semester Word Search

How many words can you find?



ACADEMIC, ACTIVITIES, ADVISING, GRADUATION, MATH, PROGRAM, RX, SCHOLARSHIPS, SEMESTER, SPRING, SUCCESS, TUTORING, TRANSFER, TRIO, VISIONS, WRITING

### Visions Kick-Off Event

Monday, January 28, 2019

12:30-1:30 p.m.

North Café

Join the Visions staff and kick off the new semester!

Pizza, salad, fun & prizes!

### Rx Kick-Off Event

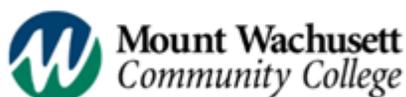
Wednesday, January 30, 2019

12:30-1:30 p.m.

North Café

Join the Rx staff and kick off the new semester!

Pizza, salad, fun & prizes!



444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000

## TRIO Complex Hours

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

Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Phone: 978-630-9297

## January & February 2019 List of Important Dates

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

<b>Monday, January 21</b>	Martin Luther King Jr. Day—no classes all campuses, day and evening	<b>Monday, February 4</b>	Pop into TRIO 12:30-1:30 p.m. TRIO Complex
<b>Wednesday, January 23</b>	<b>Full Semester &amp; Cycle 1</b> —Classes Begin	<b>Tuesday, February 5</b>	<b>Full Semester &amp; Cycle 1:</b> Last day to withdraw with a 50% refund
<b>Monday, January 28</b>	Visions Kick-Off 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Cafe	<b>Wednesday, February 13</b>	<b>MWCC Scholarship Seminar</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. TBD
<b>Tuesday, January 29</b>	<b>Full Semester &amp; Cycle 1:</b> Last day to add classes and/or drop classes with 100% refund <b>Buying a New or Used Car Seminar</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. W11	<b>Monday, February 19</b>	<b>President's Day:</b> No classes all campuses
<b>Wednesday, January 30</b>	Rx Kick-Off 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Cafe	<b>Wednesday, February 20</b>	<b>Monday Schedule:</b> All day classes all campuses
		<b>Thursday, February 21</b>	<b>Family Game Night</b> 5:30-7:30 p.m. Murphy Room
		<b>Monday, February 25</b>	<b>Cycle 1:</b> Last day to withdraw
		<b>Tuesday, February 26</b>	<b>Financial Literacy Topic TBD</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. 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