

TRiO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

January & February 2020

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

IN THIS ISSUE

A Warm Welcome

by Gaurav Khanna,
Director of the Visions and Rx Programs

Even though it can be cold and dreary outside, there is one day in January that is guaranteed to bring a smile to our faces—the first day of classes! We love seeing all of you, new and returning students alike, back on campus and ready to jump into your classwork for a new semester.

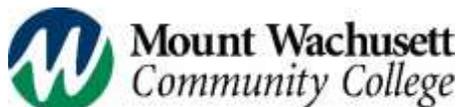
We have a full semester of support and activities planned for you. As always, please stop by the office in the first two weeks of classes to check-in with staff. We want to hear about your plans for the spring semester and to set up any support that you need. We'll also have a list of seminars and events so you can add them to your calendar now!

This semester the college has changed the registration schedule for summer classes. Registration for the summer semester will now begin February 18. Please watch out for our notifications for details if you are planning to take summer classes so that you can enroll

early and get the schedule and instructors of your choice.

We also have some staffing changes. Stephanie Giguere accepted a position at Worcester State and Sue Ivas has left to spend more time with her family. We are in the process of filling both positions and hope to have some great additions soon. In the meantime, please check in with any of the counselors and staff in the office if you need support with anything.

Your presence on campus and in online classes demonstrates your desire for growth. Why not use the resources available to you to be the best possible student you can be? Remember, successful students use services! Let us help you make this your best semester yet!



Start Your Year Right!

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



Transfer Tips

Get the scoop on transfer admissions on pg. 3.



Student Spotlight

Samantha Gibson shares her education and her path to success!



Healthy Habits That Any College Student Should Follow

by Kayla Coates
Staff Assistant

It's the start of a new semester (and a new year) which means it's time to start getting into a healthy routine now and sticking with it. Here are just some ways how you can stay on track and be more successful this semester.

Monitor your TV and Phone Time

Since tests and homework do take up a good amount of your time, you definitely deserve to make time in your schedule for a break. With that being said, you don't want to start binging a show on Netflix when you know you need to study for that exam the next day or looking at your social media profiles on your phone for hours. Make sure you balance your time wisely and don't stay up too late each night. If you

really need to, set locks for your screen time on your phone and computer so you aren't tempted to sign into them.

Healthy Diet

When you're stressed about finishing an assignment on time and feel like you need an energy boost, you will probably go and get that caffeinated or sugary drink. Be careful! If you start making this a habit, this can become very unhealthy and you start to become dependent on those drinks. If you crave caffeine, choose a drink with little to no sugar. Making sure you also have some easy but healthy meals to make for the week (like salads) helps you sneak some greens into your diet and you won't have to worry about cooking a meal.

Scheduled Gym Times

Instead of always watching TV during your break time, change it up and go to the gym. Whether you like lifting weights, taking yoga classes or even just walking for 30 minutes, any exercise will help feel refreshed and focused!.

Sunday Planning

Usually students use Sunday as a day of relaxation (which is a good thing). My advice is take about 20 minutes out of your day before the week starts to look at the week ahead and see what you will need to accomplish. This way, you can see if certain tasks take priority over others and change accordingly. This will help you have a less stressful week and stay organized.

Popcorn & Planners

Wednesday, February 5, 2020
& Thursday, February 6, 2020
12:30-1:30 p.m.
W11

Bring your planners, schedules and syllabi and have fun getting organized!



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.

Paula's Top Three Math Tips

$$\begin{array}{c}
 2 > -3 \quad \infty \quad + - \\
 0.999... = 1 \quad \times \div \\
 \pi \approx 3.14 \quad 5^2 \\
 \sqrt{2} \quad 1 + 2 \cdot 3 \quad (1 - 2) + 3 \\
 5^{(2+2)} \quad 101_2 = 5_{10}
 \end{array}$$

1. Keep Up With Your Homework

- Many of the professors give end of the semester due dates. Don't let this give you a false sense of time! If they cover it in class, do the homework BEFORE the next class.
- Playing catch up at the end of the semester is NOT easy, don't sabotage yourself.

2. See a Tutor BEFORE You Fall Behind

- If you miss a class, cover the things you missed with your tutor so you can stay up on homework.
- Come to tutoring with questions so it is a good use of your time with us.

3. Be Prepared

- Use pencil. Everyone makes mistakes and scribbling out pen is messy and confusing when you're looking through notes.
- If your professor uses the Power Points, print them out before class. You can use them to take notes.
- Have questions ready from homework assignments. If you have the question, someone else probably does too!

Are you ready to transfer?

By Sarah Pingeton

Visions Transfer Counselor



If you're thinking about transferring for the Fall 2020 semester it's time to be getting serious about completing your application! **In general**, your application deadlines will be between March 1st and May 15th, but this will vary considerably so make sure you're doing your research.

Once you know when your application is due, it's time to start the application. The application could be very simple, or may need multiple essays, letters of recommendation, and a resume along with your basic information in order to be considered for admission or for scholarships. You'll need to be organized and proactive if you're completing a complicated application.

If your application requires letters of recommendation you'll want to ask your professors for those letters first. The same way you wouldn't want a professor to spring a writing assignment on you with just a day or two to get it done, the professor doesn't want to write you a letter with only a day or two of notice. Give as much advance notice as possible, and you may want to remind the professor when you took their class and something you did for that might have stood out or been impressive, or any growth you showed in their class.

The next thing you'll want to get to work on is your essay. Writing essays and personal statements for transfer applications can be a really daunting task. Sometimes there won't be a writing prompt to get you started. If that's the case, you can write about anything you'd like. It's often best to tell your story, discuss your academic and career goals, or talk about why the school you're choosing is your perfect fit. You'll want to give yourself at least the same amount of time you'd spend on an important essay for class, and you



can have our great writing tutors review your essays before you send them off!

Once you have the essay completed and your letters of recommendation requested, you can settle in to the application itself and fill out all the necessary forms. The last thing you'll probably do is head to the **Records Office** to request an official transcript be sent to your schools of choice. I recommend sending everything off at least **one week** before the application deadline to insure everything makes it on time.

Alaina and I are here to help during every step along the way! Stop by for help figuring out your transfer application process early this spring!

Visit Worcester State University
Friday, February 7, 2020

Connect with Alaina and Sarah to schedule a college tour and watch your email for information about upcoming transfer trips!

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

Registration for summer semester begins in February 18

Check your email for additional information and stop by the TRIO Complex or call 978-630-9297 to schedule an advising appointment.

Refer a Friend!

Tell them about the great services available with the Visions & Rx Programs!

We have a few openings. If you know someone who would benefit from the support provided by the Rx and Visions Programs, please bring them by the office!

Get the Facts about AwardSpring Scholarships

By Mary Roth

Visions Professional Writing Tutor

Free Money. Yes, you read that correctly. That's exactly what the AwardSpring Scholarship application site can help you reach. Each spring, the Mount Wachusett Community College Foundation offers students the opportunity to apply for generous scholarships through the AwardSpring site. **The MWCC Foundation awards more than \$325,000 in scholarships annually.** These scholarships provide students with much needed money to support their pursuit of a college degree. And, because these are scholarships, not loans, these funds do not have to be repaid.

You may be asking yourself, "What's the catch?" The answer is none. Using the AwardSpring site, all students need to do is complete some basic information about themselves, answer some questions and

submit two short essays. That's it. The site will automatically match your application with the scholarships that fit your qualifications. Then, the Scholarship Committee will review each match and your application materials to determine the applicants who will receive awards. Award amounts vary from a few hundred dollars to over a thousand dollars, but any scholarship will help students stretch their financial aid money and relieve some of the financial pressures students face in paying for their educations.

Interested in applying? The steps are simple:

- First, access the AwardSpring application located on the iConnect site.
- Next, access the application and enter your information.

- Answer the background questions. These are designed to help the site match your application with the scholarships.
- Work on your essays with a tutor. Then, upload them to your application and submit it.

Visions and Rx students are invited to attend workshops on February 12th to help them prepare for completing the AwardSpring application. As always, writing tutors will be available to help students with writing their essays for the application. Don't miss this valuable opportunity to apply for your scholarship and get your free money!

MWCC Scholarship Seminar

Wednesday, February 12

12:30-1:30

RM W11

Improving your Financial Health in 2020

By Lauren Clifford

Visions Retention Specialist

Finances can be tricky, there is a lot of contradicting information out there, and it can be hard to decide what is right for you. Use caution when following the latest trend or basing choices off articles that show up in your Facebook feed.

Here's how to start evaluating your financial situation:

1. Track your spending-This is always a good place to start because it can help you see where your money is going and what areas you might like to change.
2. Set SMART goals- If you're unfamiliar with these SMART stands for:
 - a. Specific
 - b. Measureable
 - c. Achievable
 - d. Realistic
 - e. Time-bound
3. Track your spending some more- This is the only way to see if you're meeting your goals. You don't have to be perfect, but if

you see you're off track then make sure to get back ASAP.

Some examples potential financial goals:

- Save \$300 for emergencies by the end of the summer.
- Make coffee at home and put the \$10 a week that would typically go to Dunkin' into a travel fund.
- Pay off credit cards by going out to eat less and making double the minimum payment (and not adding new charges!)
- Increase knowledge of personal financial this semester by attending a Financial Literacy workshop.



Attend a Financial Literacy workshop and be entered to win a \$50 MWCC Foundation Scholarship!

Goal Setting

January 28

12:30-1:30 p.m.

RM115/ Multipurpose Room

Identify Theft

February 18

12:30-1:30 p.m.

RM 115/ Multipurpose Room

More seminars will be offered in March and April.

Pizza is also served, so enjoy lunch as you learn about these important financial topics!

Self-Care: A Long Term Commitment, Not a Quick Fix

By Lauren Clifford

Visions Retention Specialist



Lexico defines self-care as “the practice of taking an active role in protecting one’s own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress.”

So many times we treat self-care like some quick fix we can do to make up for not prioritizing our health. I would argue that true self care is prioritizing your mental & physical well-being on a continual basis and preventing ourselves from burning out rather than trying to fix it when we’re miserable.

Sleep- Make sure you’re prioritizing a good night’s sleep. Figure out what specifically is keeping you from going to bed on time and come up with a way to get to bed on time.

Food & Water- Everyone is different and I can’t claim to be a nutritionist, but some things are common knowledge. Prioritize water over sugary and caffeinated drinks and eat foods where you can read the ingredients.

Fresh Air & Physical Activity- Sometime I think we make fitting in exercise or getting outside too complicated. Start with small, doable goals. Park further away. Take a lap around the building between classes. Something is better than nothing!

Saying No- Are you guilty of taking on too much? Do you say yes to things just because you’re afraid of hurting people’s feelings? Practice saying “no”! Try “I’m sorry I can’t take on anything new right now” or “That sounds like a lot of time, maybe sometime in the future”

Surround yourself with positive people- I know there are times where it can’t be avoided, but whenever possible surround yourself with the people who believe in you and support your goals. It can be hard to end long term friendships, but if someone isn’t enhancing your life ask why you continue giving them your time.

Find what steals your time- Is it social media? It is bingeing on Netflix? Be mindful of where your time goes and put

limits on the things that are taking up meaningless time.

Fuel your passion- Make time for the things that make you happy! Cutting out all your hobbies because you’re busy with work and school might sound like the responsible thing to do, but giving yourself some downtime will keep you refreshed and in return more productive.

Find what refreshes you and make it a priority- Some people feel refreshed after spending time with friends. Some feel renewed after being alone for a few hours of quiet. Find what recharges you and incorporate it on a weekly basis.

Self-Care Bingo				
Practiced Being Mindful	Had Fun	Laughed	Relaxed	Exercised
Watched a Movie	Talked to a Friend	Went Outside	Brushed my Teeth	Did a Hobby
Went for a Swim	Tried Something New	Drank Water	Had a Social Media Free Day	Danced
Walked in Nature	Cooked a Healthy Meal	Took a Break	Asked for Help	Had a Hot Drink
Read a Book	Listened to Music	Sang	Spent Time with a Friend	Got a Good Night Sleep

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!

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 7.

Student Spotlight: Samantha Gibson

By Catherine Maddox-Wiley
Rx Retention Specialist

Samantha Gibson first decided to attend MWCC for its affordability, but a tour of the campus left her with bigger impressions: Small and friendly! Sam didn't want to just be a number; she preferred the opportunities to get to know her professors and for them to know her. MWCC's close-knit community would also feed Sam's biggest needs: communication and organization. Why does Sam place such importance on these two areas? Dyslexia.

When Sam was in elementary school, she was a slow reader. Sam's teachers first thought she had vision problems, so she had an eye exam and was prescribed reading glasses -- right off the pharmacy shelf. The glasses didn't solve the issue, and Sam was still a slow reader. Anxious about reading aloud in front of the class, Sam would rehearse her reading part before class to help her become acquainted with the material.

Ultimately, Sam was tested for an Individual Educational Plan which provides specialized instruction and a 504 which qualifies students for educational accommodations. It was then that she first learned about dyslexia, "a learning disorder that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words." (Mayo Clinic). Testing revealed Sam had comprehension issues and that her brain didn't work quickly. For instance, if she was given three sentences and asked to explain the main idea, she would struggle, and when she read typed words, the letters floated on the page.

As a child, Sam determined that her educational process wasn't going to be like that of others, so she turned her frustration into action, figuring out the strategies that would enable her to be academically successful.

Equally important to her learning process is Sam's recognition of who she is and what works for her. The frustration she once had as a child has given way to a positive attitude about the "extra miles" she willingly takes to accomplish tasks. Sam feels that she owes her success to her dyslexia. She doesn't know what kind of student she would be without it.

Sam's instructors and advisors get to know her very quickly. She is self-confident, clear and direct about her needs and goals and is not shy about advocating for herself and

others. While Sam has access to accommodations for her learning disability, she methodically chooses which services to utilize as she weighs her strengths against her challenges.

Sam encourages her friends to try her study techniques which can be useful for those with and without learning disabilities. Here are a few of Sam's strategies:

1. Read materials early, never at the last minute. Sam may need to read assignments multiple times. Remember the floating typed letters that Sam sees when she reads? She has found a couple of techniques that work for her:

a. Sam stretches out a book cover and places it over the page she is reading. She can see through the cover, but the white background, that makes letters float and jump, disappears.

b. For Sam, handwriting is easier to read than typed text because the words don't float or change, so she writes out important notes that she will use later for review sessions.

2. Begin assignments at least a week in advance to enhance learning and discourage cramming. This is a priority strategy, and Sam sticks to it!

3. Seek help and utilize resources. Sam's take: "You don't need to know the answer to the question / problem, you just need to know where and how to find the answer."

4. Talk with professors to clarify assignments. Don't assume what the professor expects. Sam talks with professors on the first day of class and throughout the semester to stay on track.

5. Write out vocabulary and definitions. Cut them out separately and play a matching game. Use cues to trigger memory. For instance, if the definition contains the vocabulary word in it, highlight that word in the definition to remember that it goes together with the vocab word.

6. Respect time and organization. Sam recognizes that OCD plays a role in how she gets things done; everything has a place in a certain pattern. Sam says that her OCD helps her stay on track with dyslexia.



7. Declutter at home, not just with schoolwork. Sam finds that cleaning just one thing feels better and that it's easier to get to what's important. She associates decluttering with organization which keeps her clear-headed and on task. Of course, Sam recognizes that individuals have their own sense of tidy. 😊

8. Refer to prior assignments. For example, when Sam was writing an APA formatted paper for a psychology course, she referred to some First Year Experience handouts and assignments to refresh her memory on APA.

9. Work in groups when possible. If someone is reading aloud, follow along for both the auditory and visual experience. Discussions are a good way to help prompt ideas.

10. Be sensitive to others. They need encouragement, not criticism.

The college path isn't easy, and for Samantha Gibson the path is bumpier than for many students. Sam, however, wouldn't trade places with any other student. Though dyslexia doesn't define the whole of Sam, she was willing to offer us a glimpse into this significant part of who she is. She says, "I am proud of my story and there is not a day that has gone by that I wish I was different."

We like to see hard workers rewarded for the efforts. Special note to Sam: TRIO is cheering for your acceptance into the Physical Therapy Assistant program! Keep going strong and good luck!



Seminar Preview: How to Succeed in Online Courses

Planning to take an online course or currently registered for one? This is the seminar for you! On **Tuesday, February 11 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. in the Murphy Room**, a faculty panel will share their expectations of online students. Students will be encouraged to ask questions to gain a better understanding of some of the common challenges of online courses. This is a great opportunity to hear from the faculty who teach online courses and learn strategies for success!

Spring Semester Word Search

How many words can you find?

S	V	B	P	O	T	P	A	L	T	B	C	S	P	G
L	M	A	L	R	R	J	A	Z	I	O	U	B	D	V
L	A	D	H	A	J	T	E	J	M	N	G	Z	I	L
I	R	V	T	Z	C	N	X	M	E	K	U	S	K	E
K	G	I	A	G	D	K	I	D	M	T	I	C	R	A
S	O	S	M	C	N	T	B	G	A	O	N	H	O	D
Y	R	I	K	A	M	I	N	O	N	E	E	E	W	E
D	P	N	V	E	X	I	T	S	A	N	J	C	E	R
U	X	G	N	Y	R	R	P	T	G	R	O	K	M	S
T	R	T	D	O	A	R	T	L	E	L	D	I	O	H
S	S	Q	T	N	O	A	I	Z	M	S	I	N	H	I
M	C	U	S	G	F	S	U	I	E	A	L	A	L	P
K	T	F	R	W	H	K	L	F	N	J	Q	A	M	Y
P	E	A	N	E	W	S	L	E	T	T	E	R	O	E
R	M	S	P	I	H	S	R	A	L	O	H	C	S	G

ADVISING
BLACKBOARD
CHECK IN
COMMITMENT
EMAIL
ENGLISH
GOAL SETTING
HOMEWORK
LAPTOP
LEADERSHIP
MATH
NEWSLETTER
RX PROGRAM
SCHOLARSHIPS
STUDY SKILLS
TIME MANAGEMENT
TRANSFER
TUTORING
VISIONS PROGRAM

Visions Kick-Off Event

Thursday, January 23, 2020

12:30-1:30 p.m.

South Café

Join the Visions staff and kick off the new semester!

Pizza, salad, fun & prizes!

Rx Kick-Off Event

Monday, January 27, 2020

12:30-1:30 p.m.

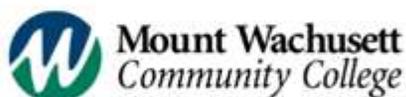
North Café

Join the Rx staff and kick off the new semester!

Pizza, salad, fun & prizes!



Let Visions & Rx help you
see a successful 2020!



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 2020 List of Important Dates

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

<i>Monday, January 20</i>	Martin Luther King Jr. Day—no classes all campuses, day and evening	<i>Tuesday, February 4</i>	Full Semester & Cycle 1: Last day to withdraw with a 50% refund
<i>Wednesday, January 22</i>	Full Semester & Cycle 1 —Classes Begin	<i>Wednesday, February 5 & Thursday, February 6</i>	Popcorn and Planners 12:30-1:30 p.m. W11
<i>Thursday, January 23</i>	Visions Kick-Off 12:30-1:30 p.m. South Cafe	<i>Tuesday, February 11</i>	How to Succeed in Online Courses 12:30-1:30 p.m. Murphy Room
<i>Monday, January 27</i>	Rx Kick-Off 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Cafe	<i>Wednesday, February 12</i>	MWCC Scholarship Seminar 12:30-1:30 p.m. W11
<i>Tuesday, January 28</i>	Full Semester & Cycle 1: Last day to add classes and/or drop classes with 100% refund Financial Literacy—Goal Setting 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 115	<i>Thursday, February 13</i>	Transfer Seminar 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 201 Transfer Seminar for Healthcare Majors 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 205
		<i>Monday, February 17</i>	President's Day: No classes all campuses
		<i>Tuesday, February 18</i>	Financial Literacy—Identity Theft 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 115
		<i>Wednesday, February 19</i>	Family Activity Night 5:30-7:30 p.m. North Café
		<i>Monday, February 24</i>	Cycle 1: Last day to withdraw

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