

# TRiO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

# March 2020

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

IN THIS ISSUE

## Marching On!

by Gaurav Khanna,  
Director of the Visions and Rx Programs

Welcome to March! The semester is well on its way. Make sure to join the Visions staff at the Visions Mid-Semester Gathering on Wednesday, March 25 at 12:30 in the North Café and the Rx staff at the Rx Mid-Semester Gathering on Thursday, March 26 at 12:30 in the North Café.

### Mid-Semester Check-ins/Four-Week Assessments

We want to know how the semester is going for you! Come in and schedule your mid-semester check-ins and review your four-week assessments. Faculty take a lot of time to give feedback on classroom preparation and participation in addition to grades or attendance. They also share positive and constructive feedback from the faculty.

### Spring Break Career Conference

Spring Break is March 16-20. We are excited to offer our Career Conference on March 17 and 18. The two days will be packed full of informative sessions including panels with employers, career opportunities in our area, input from college resources and opportunities for interview prep and feedback. Spaces are limited, so sign up in the TRIO office today!

We are planning a trip to Boston on Thursday, March 19. We'll stop at Faneuil Hall and then see a film at the New England Aquarium IMAX theatre. We'll depart Gardner at 9:00 a.m. and plan to be back by 4:30 p.m. Stop by the TRIO Complex with your \$5 deposit to sign-up. Lunch is not included, so pack a lunch!

### Transfer Trips & Deadlines

Sarah and Alaina have planned transfer visits to Fitchburg State, UMASS Amherst and Worcester State. If you would like to visit another college or university, talk with them to schedule a one-on-one trip.

Many institutions have spring deadlines for fall enrollment, so make sure you are on track. Even if you are not planning to transfer for fall 2020 but are thinking transfer, do meet Sarah or Alaina. They can help ensure that you are in transferable classes and majors.

### Scholarships

The MWCC Foundation Scholarships are a great opportunity to apply for scholarships with just one application! Mary Roth provides key strategies to get started. Stop by the TRIO Complex if you need help or want someone to read over your application materials.

Don't forget that we are here for you! Stop by the TRIO Complex or call the office to schedule an appointment with an advisor or tutor and watch your email for opportunities and events.



### Career Conference

Learn more about our second career conference on pg. 7



### Year-Round Scheduling

Learn about this important change on pg. 2



### Student Spotlight

Justin Bishop shares his story of success on pg.6.

Rx Program

VISIONS Program

Mount Wachusett  
Community College

# Introducing Year-Round Scheduling! Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

by Catherine Maddox-Wiley  
Rx Retention Specialist

Noticed the readability of this article? Catherine's article is an example of the **Cornell Note Taking Method**, a two-column method that is great for studying for exams.

## What is year-round scheduling?

Year-round scheduling allows students to view two semesters of course listings at a time.

For example, course listings for fall 2020 and spring 2021 will be available for viewing in April, 2020.

See below for viewing and registration details.

## How is this beneficial?

Students will be able to see which semesters the courses will be offered as well as the days and times.

They are encouraged to take courses during the semester they are offered, particularly if the courses are only offered once that year.

This preview will enable students to create an educational plan and course schedules in order to coordinate school, home and work schedules.

## What is an educational plan?

Students will be encouraged to create a two-semester list of courses they will take in both fall and spring semesters. This plan will help them stay on track for completing required courses and graduating in a timely manner.

## When is the registration period?

Fall 2020: Viewing and registration in April, 2020

Spring 2021: Viewing in April, 2020 and registration in November, 2020

## What about summer registration?

Summer 2020: Viewing and registration in February, 2020

As always, TRIO students should meet with their Visions or Rx advisors to discuss their academic and career goals, course selections and schedules, college expenses and financial resources. Plan well, friends!

## Seminar Spotlight: Frugal Living: Eating on a Budget

By Alaina Lucchetti  
Rx Transfer Counselor

Living frugally is a lifestyle that requires practice and planning. Whether you already live frugally or are just getting started this information is for you! Here are some tips on how to eat healthy without breaking the bank!

**Don't pay for convenience** - Pre-made, pre-cut, and pre-portioned foods are the most expensive and should be the first thing you cut from your grocery list. Buy fresh, buy in bulk, and portion your meals on your own.

**Meal plan**- Set your budget based on your predetermined menu for the week. Stick to your shopping list and avoid any "tempting" add-ons. This not only helps with money but also time. Meal planning will allow you to cut down your shopping

to one trip, and you can get all of your prep work done for the week in one day.

**Prepare in bulk**- Grains, vegetables, and fruits can all be prepared in one swoop. Your grains can be fully cooked and stored for your use in meals throughout the week. Chop (use a food processor when possible to cut back on time) all of your vegetables for the week and store in airtight containers for your use over the course of the week. Prepare and portion your fruit for grab and go snack items.

**Find inexpensive staples**- To make the most of your budget, shop vegetables that are in season and/or on sale. Stock up on any sale non-perishables that you can use in the future.

You can often find deals on extremely ripe vegetables if you are able to cook with them the day of. Keep your eyes open for local farmers markets where you can often find great deals!

Remember, you are only human- eat the ice-cream or whatever it is you're craving. Treat yourself every once in a while. Just make sure to plan for it. That way your decision isn't bad for your health AND your wallet!

### Frugal Living: Eating on a Budget

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

1230-1:30 p.m.

RM 115/ Multipurpose RM

Attendees will be entered to win a \$50 MWCC Foundation Scholarship. Pizza will be served

# A Deep Look at the Best Deals for Transfer

By Sarah Pingeton

Visions Transfer Counselor

If you've read my articles or met with me, you know that I can't wait to tell you all about MassTransfer and the Commonwealth Commitment and the great deals they offer Massachusetts residents who choose to start at community colleges. These programs are great deals, and they are great fits for a lot of students. But if I'm honest, focusing only on the simple application process and comparatively affordable sticker prices leaves out a big part of the story.

In Massachusetts alone there are 56 private schools that offer bachelor's degrees compared to 13 public institutions. Expand that to New England and New York, and there are 225 private schools to consider. That's a HUGE list to find your perfect fit, and you're probably doing yourself a disservice if you never consider a single one of those private institutions. Consider the unique majors, internship experiences, clubs, faculty, and cultures you could find, let alone the possible deep networks to help graduates get great jobs in their chosen fields. Can you really put a price on an experience that can change the trajectory of your entire life?

Turns out, you can absolutely put a price on that. The average cost of Private Non-Profit college tuition nation-wide is

\$36,801 according to U.S. News. Some schools, like Yale, have sticker prices of higher than \$55,000 a year. \$55,000! A year! I can certainly see why a search for private schools would end right there, especially compared with Fitchburg State's tuition of just \$10,505 a year for full-time study.

But what if I told you the price tag wasn't really the price tag? Yale advertises \$55,000/year as the price, and some people do pay that much. But the average cost after scholarships and grants at Yale is \$17,000/year, which is only \$600 more a year than UMass Amherst. And it's YALE!

So how does Yale get to that \$17,000 average? It's complicated. Yale is one of a small number of schools nationally that provide financial aid that meets 100% of your family's demonstrated financial need. When you do your FAFSA, your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is determined. You're probably already familiar with that. A school that meets 100% of need gives you a financial aid package that covers the total cost of attendance, minus that EFC amount. For example, if FAFSA determines your family can afford to pay \$5,000, a school that meets 100% of need will give you financial aid for everything except

\$5,000. So back to our Yale example. The total cost of attendance at Yale (including room and board, books and supplies) is estimated to be \$76,490 a year. If your family's EFC is \$5000, Yale will provide a financial aid package that supplies \$71,490.

Some schools meet 100% of need with a mix of scholarships, grants, and loans. Those loans could be hefty. However, an even smaller list of schools meet your financial need without loans, and a handful of those goldmines are right here in the Northeast! Amherst College, Bowdoin College, Colby College, Swarthmore College, and yes, our example, Yale University are just some of the nearby schools that meet 100% of financial need. Yes, these schools have highly competitive admissions processes, but if you are accepted they provide wonderful opportunities and educations.

If all of this sounds interesting to you, stop by soon for a complete list of schools that provide 100% financial aid packages (and some others that come close) and to discuss if one of these schools could be a fit for you! If you've met with me, you've probably heard me say, "Don't be your own gatekeeper." Let's see how far you can go!

## Transfer Visits

Sign-up sheets are posted on Sarah's door. Limited transportation is provided.

**UMASS Amherst**  
Friday, March 6

**Fitchburg State University**  
Friday, April 3

Sarah and Alaina are beginning to plan their fall transfer trips. Let them know if you want to visit a specific college or university!

# Four Ways How You Can Prepare For an Interview:

By Kayla Coates  
Staff Assistant

Interviews can be stressful, especially if you don't feel like you're prepared for it. Preparing for the interview beforehand will only help you feel more confident and ace it. Here are just a few ways how you can get organized and feel ready to go!

## 1. Index Cards:

Keeping a set of index cards on you with your strengths/weaknesses written down is helpful to refresh before heading into an interview. This is especially useful when they ask you about your weaknesses. Since you will review those answers beforehand, this will help you answer the question confidently when they ask you. Interviewers want to see if you can explain your weaknesses but make them sound like they really are not weaknesses at all.

Interviewers also want to see candidates interested in their company so having written questions to ask the interviewer will only benefit you and in turn, show that you are prepared and thoughtful.

## 2. Résumé:

Have a printed copy of your résumé on hand so you have it during the interview. This might seem old school, but some companies still want to see the hard copy résumé and it's almost like a test to see if you came prepared for the interview. Don't assume that they will have your résumé!

## 3. Research the company:

While you're taking a look at the company to see what it's all about, make sure you take a look at the company's missions, values and facts. I was once

asked in an interview about a company's mission and values and thankfully, I had taken the time to learn it. Regardless of having an interview or not, looking at the company's background will help you determine if this workplace would be the right fit for you.

## 4. Dress for success:

Cheesy, I know, but doing so ensures that you look serious about the role you are applying for and that you are a confident professional. Showing up in jeans and a t-shirt comes off to an employer as lazy. Even if you don't have a dress suit, wearing a nice pair of dress pants and a button down or nice top with dressier shoes will go a long way. Plus, it will help you feel more confident!

## Interview Attire on a Budget

By Lauren Clifford  
Visions Retention Specialist

If you're on the hunt for a job there's a good chance that your budget isn't currently overflowing. So how ironic is it that you need to go buy new clothes to look presentable to get that new job so you can make more money? Hopefully the following tips can help take a little of the stress off the process of interviewing.

**Shop your closet first-** Or your friend's closet. Sticking to a budget means shopping what you already have first.

**Go Thrifting-** Thrift shops can be a great place to find the basics: solid colored button-ups, khaki or black pants, and even dress shoes.

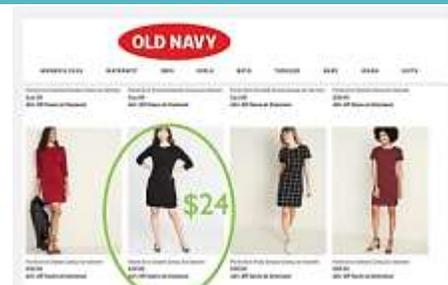
**Shop sales-** If you're thinking you may need interview attire in your near future, be on the lookout for sales at your favorite stores. My favorite place for affordable interview/work attire is Old Navy. You can always find sales/coupons, and they usually have a

good selection of neutral & solid color pieces that are a great foundation for a new professional's wardrobe.

**Clean and unwrinkled is worth every penny!**- No matter what you're wearing, making sure it is free of rips and stains is the #1 concern. A nice pair of jeans can get you further than a dingy pair of khakis in most cases.

**You might not need a suit-** If you are applying for a job in your field, find out what the industry standard is. If a full suit isn't required, opt to spend your money on quality basic pieces that you will use more.

Ladies, you don't need to wear a dress, but I chose this as an example because of how flexible it is. You can use scarves or jewelry to add your own flair, but you can also make it work for almost any season.



For those who prefer pants and a shirt as an option, I recommend solid colors when starting out because they are more versatile. Go for neutral pants and add shirts/ties/jackets as you need them.



**FINAL TIP: Try things on in advance.** There's nothing worse than getting dressed the morning of an interview just to realize things don't fit the same as they had the last time you wore them.

# Resume—What Not to Do

By Mary Roth

Visions Writing Tutor

Your résumé is a valuable tool in your job search and is much more than a listing of your work history and your education. It is a marketing tool that you can use to promote your skills and abilities, as well as your related work and volunteer experience. Because prospective employers see many resumes, it is important to make your résumé stand out from the others. Jobseekers will write resumes that they believe are creative and innovative to try to gain employers' attention, however, jobseekers must avoid appearing unprofessional or too unconventional for employers to consider them. Here are some things to avoid when writing your résumé.

## Avoid using templates or having someone write your résumé.

Writing your résumé can be a challenging and overwhelming experience. With so much conflicting information out there, using a template or relying on someone else to create your résumé for you can seem like a good idea. Unfortunately, templates can cost money and are not always easily edited or updated, and it can feel misleading when an employer meets you and you do not speak in a way that is like the way your résumé sounds.

**What to do instead:** Use Word or Google docs to create your résumé, using a standard format that emphasizes your skills, education and experience. Get a trusted person or advisor to review your résumé and help you with marketing your skills in the best way for your intended career.

**Avoid inflating, inventing or misusing job titles.** Job titles can be confusing or misleading when they are inflated to sound more impressive or important or taken out of context. A prospective employer may be impressed by a title, such as "environmental engineer;" however, when the employer interviews a jobseeker who used a title like that and discovers that the jobseeker

was actually a custodian, they are unlikely to be considered for the job.

**What to do instead:** Use your actual job title or a similar job title and make sure to emphasize how you did your job, rather than focusing on the title. If you work in a coffee shop as a server, say that, but in the interview, make sure to discuss your excellent customer service skills and your attention to detail.

**Avoid gimmicks.** It may be tempting to try to gain an employer's attention by including eye-catching fonts, playful borders or even your LinkedIn photo. Unfortunately, these have several drawbacks: first, if you are submitting your résumé via e-mail, the graphics may distort your text and make your information unreadable; second, these features may send the message that you are not professional or business-like to the employer.

**What to do instead:** Keep your résumé business-like and use formal résumé paper in muted colors, such as cream, ivory or light slate. Use traditional fonts and sizes, but use bold or italics to emphasize important information. If you are in a creative field, such as graphic design, create a separate portfolio of your work and bring it to the interview.

**Do not include your references on your résumé.** Jobseekers will often include the names, companies and contact information on the bottom of their resumes. This adds text and creates the impression of a fuller résumé, but employers are disappointed when they see that the résumé portion is actually small or limited in scope.

**What to do instead:** Create a separate page entitled References and include your references' names, companies or agencies, addresses, phone numbers and e-mails. It is also acceptable to include a very brief note related to your relationship with the reference.

## Spring Break Ideas

By Amy Moury  
Rx Math Tutor

### Stay home

Read

Organize your room/house

Catch up on your favorite shows

### Stay indoors

Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (free admission for students with ID)

Woods Hole Science Aquarium (free but donations accepted)

Great Falls Discovery Center

### Stay local

USS Constitution (ship is free, museum asks for donations)

Bike paths (North Central Pathway, Nashua River Rail Trail, others?)

Parks (Coggshall Park in Fitchburg, Willard Brook State Forest in Townsend)

### Stay career-focused

Attend the Spring Break Career Conference on March 17 & 18.

### Stay busy

Join us for a trip to Boston on March 19. Sign-up in the TRIO Complex or call 978-630-9297.

## Student Spotlight: Justin Bishop

By Dawn Babineau

Visions Learning Specialist

In this edition of our TRIO newsletter we shine our student focus on Justin Bishop.

Justin is majoring in Criminal Justice, an active participant of the TRIO program and as many who know him would agree... just an all-around good guy.

Justin is an academic achiever. He is on the Dean's list and has consistently received impressive grades since he started at MWCC. Academics have not always come easy for Justin. The first few years of high school, Justin reports that he did not take school as seriously as he should. His future could have very easily gone in a different direction. Playing football however, has always been important to him. Once he found out that playing football and keeping decent grades were interconnected, he found himself buckling down more with his studies. In college, Justin still loves football and hopes to someday play on a college team (unfortunately MWCC does not have a team), but until he reaches that next institution, he remains focused on his academics for his own personal growth and future goal of working in law enforcement. He works really hard to earn the strong grades he receives. At any given time, Justin can be found studying for a test, working on assignments or taking advantage of the tutoring supports within the TRIO office.

In addition to academics, Justin finds time for social interests and good causes. He volunteers as a NGE (next generation elite) football coach. NGE is a Professional Sports Performance and Player Development Company working with athletes of all ages, in all sports and of all levels. Justin credits playing football as something that has helped him find focus in his life. Bullying is a topic Justin

feels strongly about. When he was younger, he had some experience with bullies calling him names about his size. When he started playing football, he gained more confidence and built up more strength and built a resilience to these name-callers. He learned not to allow others to define him or his actions. As an adult, and a person with an interest in law enforcement, he feels strongly about helping others who may feel bullied to realize their inner strengths. Justin reports a time or two of calling out others who thought being a bully was acceptable.

Another area that Justin feels strongly about is the necessity to participate in blood drives. Justin is amongst a small percentage of the population with the blood type O-. Because of the scarce supply of persons with this blood type, Justin is highly sought after to donate blood. He sees donating blood as his personal responsibility and asks others to join in as well. He typically makes a blood donation multiple times throughout the year.

In addition to spending a lot of time hitting the books, Justin likes to spend his free time working out in the gym, spending time with family and friends, playing video games and watching movies. His favorite types of movies are ones with unique vantage points from directors such as Quentin Tarantino.

Justin has much advice for other students. Emotionally, he says he recommends pursuing things that you are passionate about, keeping a positive outlook, never letting others define you and to always follow your dreams. Academically he stresses using tutoring and finding confidence to speak with



your instructors both inside and outside of class. He reminds others that your instructors are also people who can give you references when needed. Justin speaks of trying to avoid procrastinating on assignments. A tip he shares that has been helpful for him is to start assignments on the first day they are given out. This, he says, sets you up to have an idea of the work involved and the time you need for completion. He says it is helpful to keep all parts of your life in balance in order to get to your goal.

Justin's future goals are to finish his degree and to transfer to a four year institution, preferably one such as Framingham State with a competitive football team and to continue studying law enforcement with a goal of a career in that field.

Book that Justin recommends: *The New Encyclopedia of Modern Bodybuilding: The Bible of Bodybuilding, Fully Updated and Revised* by Arnold Schwarzenegger

Justin's Favorite Quote: "I am the Master of my Fate/ I am the Captain of my Soul." from the poem "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley (1875):

# Spring Break Career Conference

Tuesday, March 17 & Wednesday, March 18, 2020

10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

MWCC Gardner Campus

Your degree or certificate is only one part of your professional success. Get the tools you need to not only land your first job after college, but a career that will grow. Dedicating this time during Spring Break is an investment in your personal and professional future.



**Seats are limited**

Register today with the following link

[bit.ly/TRIOConference](https://bit.ly/TRIOConference)

Or visit the TRIO Complex.

See a Visions or Rx counselor for more information

## Conference Highlights

- Networking
- Job Market Overview
- One-on-One Résumé Review
- Mock Interviews
- Social Media Overhaul
- Professional conduct
- Dress for Success Practice
- And More!



### Dress for Success

Monday, March 23

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

South Café

No item is priced more than a dollar!

### Visions Mid-Semester Gathering

Wednesday, March 25

12:30-1:30 p.m.  
North Café

### Rx Mid-Semester Gathering

Thursday, March 26

12:30-1:30 p.m.  
North Café

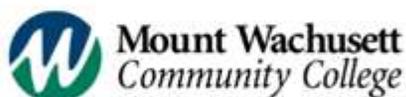
### MWCC Career Fair

Wednesday, April 1

MWCC Gardner Campus

Meet with regional organizations and connect with potential employers!

Watch your email for more information!



444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000

## March Checklist

- ✓ Continue to **go to class**, **communicate with your instructor** and **complete your school work**.
- ✓ **Review Four-Week Assessments**
- ✓ Attend **at least one TRIO event**.
- ✓ **Complete your 2020-2021 FAFSA**.
- ✓ **Apply for MWCC Foundation Scholarships**.
- ✓ Schedule your registration appointment. **Priority Registration Begins April 6**
- ✓ Check your email daily!

March 2020 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	4	5	6 <b>Transfer Trip to UMASS Amherst</b>	7	
8	9	10 <b>Frugal Living: Eating on a Budget</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 115	11 <b>Cycle 1: Last day of classes</b>	12	13	14	
15	16	17 <b>Spring Break Career Conference</b>	18 <b>Spring Break Career Conference</b>	19 <b>Faneuil Hall/IMAX Trip</b>	20	21	
<b>Spring Break: No classes All Campuses, day and evening</b>							
22	23 <b>Cycle 2: Classes Begin</b>	24	25 <b>Visions Mid-Semester Gathering</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Café	26 <b>Rx Mid-Semester Gathering</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Café	27	28	
29	30 <b>TEAS Workshop</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 345 <b>Cycle 2: Last day to add classes and/or drop classes with 100% refund</b>	31 <b>Budgeting &amp; Saving</b> 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 115					
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							