

TRiO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

November & December 2020

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

November is Here

by Gaurav Khanna

Director, TRIO SSS Programs

When I look at the calendar, I can't believe it is time to adjust the clocks and get ready for registration! It feels like our current situation is interminable and yet this semester seems to be flying by. So, as we ramp up to successfully complete the fall semester, it is time to start looking forward and begin planning for the spring.

Registration: As with the fall, most classes will be held virtually. We know that for many of you this is not the preferred method of instruction but it is important to try to stick with school. The data is clear—students who step away often have a harder time coming back and getting into the rhythm of school. It may mean taking just a class or two to keep things manageable or setting up support services in advance or choosing classes that are a little less stressful. Let's talk and figure out what works for you! Everyone should have received registration emails with links to sign up for advising sessions (also included in your handy dandy e-letter). You can also

call 978-630-9297 or stop by our Monday-Thursday open Zoom sessions to schedule.

If you want to self-register, check out Alaina's article on page 2. Make sure to connect with an advisor and ask them to review your schedule.

Blackboard: We now have our own little corner for Rx & Visions on Blackboard. You should automatically see the link when you log into Blackboard, along with all your other classes. As this is our first time using Blackboard, the site is a work in progress. We have prioritized adding links to current and future events as well as recordings of past seminars that you can view on your own schedule. To get credit for participating by viewing the videos, please click on the title of the video and answer the short survey after you are done watching.

Graduation and/or Transfer: Planning to move to a four-year school in

the spring? Please get in touch with Sarah Pingeton or Alaina Lucchetti as soon as you can. They can often facilitate fee waivers and other support to make sure you have a smooth transition. If you're planning to take a break, please let us know that as well.

Make that final push: We're in the final six weeks of the semester. You can do this. If you begin to doubt yourself, reach out and get the support we can offer to make sure you get your work done. This may not be your best semester or lead to the prettiest grades on your transcript but very little in life is perfect right now. If you can make it through this for a few more weeks you will be able to look back with pride at what you were able to accomplish and knowing that you gave it your best shot. We are in your corner!



Spring Registration Begins November 2

by Alaina Lucchetti
Rx Transfer Counselor

Ready or not, registration for the spring 2021 semester begins Monday, November 2nd. We're here to make sure you are in fact prepared and ready for registration!! Remember, certain courses and class times are highly sought after and will fill...quickly! Do your best to plan and prepare for registration by following the steps below

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.
- You can also 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 for an appointment using the calendly link

Register through WebConnect

- The process began on Monday, November 2.
- You can also schedule a time with a TRIO advisor 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?

Congratulations and....

- Good job!

Study Tip:

by Catherine Maddox-Wiley
Rx Retention Specialist

Have you ever purchased an item that requires assembly? Are you the person who dives right in and starts putting the thing together? Did you ever find that you were missing pieces or had leftover bolts or had a wobbly product? When you travel, how many times have you gotten lost? How much time did you spend in lost-ville?

There are plenty of situations when instructions can be ignored. You've probably heard that great cooks don't use recipes. Still, there are plenty of individuals who are willing to pay the price for approaching tasks in their own way. However, on the academic side of life, there is only one way to success and that is to follow directions. Ignoring them can lead to academic distress.

At this point in the semester, you have likely had a number of assignments, quizzes, and exams and probably have big projects due at the end of the semester. How well have you done by following or not following instructions? If you answered, "not great", this checklist is for you.

1. **Eliminate your assumptions.** Sure, you've taken plenty of exams and completed many assignments. The instructions are all pretty much the same, right? Not necessarily. The set-up and format of the instructions can vary. Consider this example: The assignment sheet has instructions and a list of questions. Of course, your initial thought is to answer each question, so you write your answers one-by-one. What you may have



missed in the instructions is that the professor wanted you to compose an essay, using the list of questions as a guideline. The professor may have had a specific purpose for the essay. By not completing the assignment, you have lost some of the learning that was intended. Avoid sabotaging the goals and learning outcomes of the assignments.

2. Before you begin an assignment or exam, **get the overview by reading the instructions all the way through.** Read every word and every sentence. Instructions will not read like text messages. They aren't quick and to the point which requires you to slow down and take your time.

3. If you do not have a firm grasp on what is expected, **ask your professor.** In particular, online learning requires the professor to provide a lot of written detail. If the message isn't clear, tell your professor your interpretation of the assignment and identify what you find confusing. This enables the professor to confirm where you are on track and to clarify where you might be off track. Professors would rather you do well on the assignment than spend time on a poorly executed one.

4. **Make your own checklist** of the parts of the assignment. This reinforces the task and helps you break the task down into smaller components. For instance, if you are writing a research paper, consider how you are going to approach the parts of the paper. Include a list of the questions and topics you are expected to address.

5. **Use a dictionary.** If the assignment contains words or phrases that aren't familiar, look them up. Don't overlook the vocabulary and don't guess at their meanings.

Because we follow instructions out of habit on a daily basis, we take them for granted. Give instructions the attention they deserve. After all, they improve learning and understanding; create procedures; save time, money, and lives (think safety and medical instructions)!



Are You a Leader?

Yes No

If you pondered this question at all, then you are a leader. Leaders take on a multitude of roles and leadership can appear different depending on the situation. Learn more about leadership through TRIO Leaders, a multi-week seminar series designed to help you develop your leadership program. Watch your email for more information or reach out to Sarah Pingeton or Sara Williams, facilitators of this year's TRIO Leaders series.

Time-Saving Tips & Tricks

by Paula Clapp and Sarah Kipp
Visions Learning Specialists

Have you ever...

- looked at the time and wondered where the last hour went?
- spent way too long looking for that really important email that had the login information you needed?
- wrote down on a piece of paper great things your professor shared with you and then couldn't find the paper later when you wanted to reference all that good stuff?

You are not alone! One of the ways we can "get back" some of the "lost" time in our days is to take a few minutes and create strong organizational systems that help us stay on track. Here are three strategies that can help increase productivity and efficiency.

Create a dedicated workspace—even if it a portable one! By now, you may have a favorite place set up in your home where you can log on to Blackboard and Zoom calls, check your email, and spend time studying for your courses. If you live in a home where you need to change your work location often, consider using a backpack or workbag as your dedicated workspace. Keep your devices, all notes and papers, textbooks, pens, and **anything else that helps you focus and study** in your workbag. Some favorite workbag extras may include a pack of gum, a battery pack charger, or a spare set of reading glasses, if you use them.

Bonus tip: At the end of your work session, and before you move on to something else in your house, take a few minutes to tidy up your dedicated workspace. If you are using a backpack or workbag, place everything back

inside the bag before you change activities.

Tame your inbox! With learning happening mostly online, reading and processing email has become even more important than it was before! Setting up folders in email can make a big difference in the amount of time spent looking for that "very important email." Rather than setting up folders by course or content, consider creating folders that relate to what you need to "do" with the email. Here is a sample list of possible sub-folders:

@Action – This folder is for emails that need immediate action! If you move emails into an "action" folder, remember to check this folder several times a day.

@Tickler – This folder is for emails that have login information (or event details) for something that is happening in the future and that you want to be able to find quickly.

@Waiting – Sometimes, you may be waiting for someone else to respond or act before you can do your part. This folder is a place to hold the initial email exchange while you wait.

Bonus tip: To help keep your email inbox clean and empty, use the "archive" option for emails that you want to keep instead of delete but no longer need in your inbox or folders.

Color-code and post visual schedules where you and your family can see them! Even though many classes are asynchronous, and you can complete the work at whatever time works best

for you, consider scheduling times in advance on your daily and weekly calendar to focus on work for specific classes. If you are working on overdue assignments, schedule in times to work on your current assignments and then add "catch up" blocks of times as well. Knowing the day before **what you will be working** on and **when you will be doing the work** actually helps your brain "get ready" to show and do the work the next day. Posting your work plan in a place where your family can see helps everyone know when you will be available—and when you will be focusing on your coursework. If you are the parent or support person for other at-home learners, consider helping your loved ones make and post their visual weekly work plans in the same place that you share yours!

Bonus tip: Create a visual weekly work plan that is fun, functional, and **WORKS FOR YOU!** Choose colors and font sizes that you like. Keep the text clear and concise so it is easy to read at a glance. Make your work plan as big as you need. Some people make a poster-size plan to post on the wall and then keep a smaller version available in their dedicated workspace. Have fun with the process!

End of Semester Gathering

Wednesday, December 9
12:30-1:30 p.m.

Join the Visions & Rx staff for important updates and some much needed connection!

Watch your email for the link!

Navigating Personal Growth as a First Generation College Student

A panel discussion

by Lauren Clifford
Visions Retention Specialist

What does it mean to be First Generation?

A student whose parents did not earn a bachelor's degree are typically considered "First Gen". Even if you have an older sibling or other relative who went to college you are still considered First Gen.

Why is that?

Students whose parents went to college have the benefit of their parents understanding the experience that the student is going through. They can offer advice and sympathize with the challenges.

What we hope you gain from our panel?

It's okay to GROW! One of the challenges that isn't talked about as frequently is how you may grow and change as a person during your time in college, and THAT'S OKAY. You may be exposed to new people, new ideas, and new experiences during your educational journey.

When is the panel?

Every year on November 8th we recognize the accomplishments of the students who are the first in their families. This year, since November 8th is a Sunday, we'll be celebrating on Monday, November 9th.



Navigating Personal Growth as a First Generation College Student

Hear from our panel of guests, many you will know from around campus, about their experiences as first generation college students. They will be sharing their stories about the challenges they faced, how they overcame them, who they turned to for support, and what advice they would like to share with you.

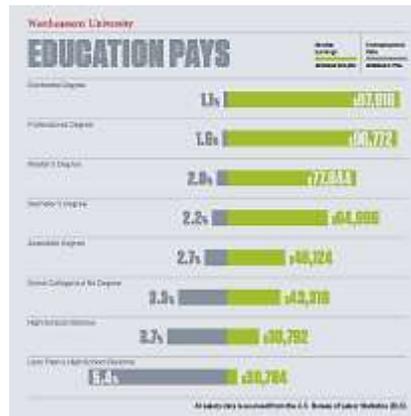
Join us November 9th at 12:30pm via Zoom

<http://bit.ly/firstgen11092020>

Is Earning a Bachelor's Degree Worth It?

by Sarah Pingeton
Visions Transfer Counselor

In these uncertain times, you may be considering or reconsidering if it's worth the time, effort, and money to continue your education beyond your Associate Degree at MWCC. We've always known that people with Bachelor's Degrees earn higher salaries on average than people with less education, but what about now? Would having a Bachelor's help, even during a pandemic? The short answer is yes. On average, people with higher salaries have seen their jobs recover more quickly in 2020. Don't take my word for it, check out these charts with information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

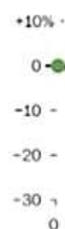


This first chart makes it clear that every degree level earned means higher salary and lower unemployment on average.

The second chart, from PBS Newshour, shows job loss or growth for different income levels during the 2008 recession and the current Coronavirus crisis. It's easy to see that higher earning people haven't been hit as hard as lower income earners.

So, is your Bachelor's degree worth it? If a Bachelor's means a higher income, and we know it does, then yes! Now, more than ever.

2008 recession



Coronavirus crisis



Notes: Based on a three-month average to show the trend in volatile data.

Source: Labor Department via IPUMS, with methodology assistance from Ernie Tedeschi of Evercore ISI

Student Spotlight: Anthony Enman

by Dawn Babineau, Sarah Kipp and Angela Snyder
Visions Staff

I can remember when Anthony first started at MWCC. On orientation day he showed me how he had graphed out every session offered that day so as to make sure he was able to take advantage of every opportunity available. It was at this point I knew he was going to be successful as a college student.

As you read the interview below, you will find that Anthony in addition to being a conscientious student is an interesting young man with passionate views on history and social justice. Anyone that knows Anthony would agree that he is likely the first person to assist another in need and would be the last to leave a situation until everyone was equally served. Warning, if you get him talking about history or social causes, or if you are daring enough to mix the two categories, you will see his face light up and become animated and you are in for a lengthy and lively conversation.

Major: Liberal Art—History and Political Science

Book you would recommend?

Anything in current history and world history sections of the bookstore!

Favorite Quote? When you generalize, you tell general lies!

What would we be surprised to know about you?

I recently got my driver's license. I've enjoyed taking drives to swing by and look at my old house – the place I lived from 2000 – 2010. Thanksgiving marks 10 years after moving out of that house. It's something I'm very sentimental about.

What is a cause you are passionate about?

Politics and electoral reform. I want to make every vote count and ensure that a party's seat

count in Congress is justified by their share of the popular vote.

What have you learned from other students?

I've learned that it is really important to consider multiple opinions in class discussions and that it's important to build good working relationships with your fellow students, specifically when it comes to communicating about class projects. It puts you on good terms with the person and helps develop good communication skills when interacting with that person—whether on a project or when interacting outside the class.

Favorite interests on campus?

Interested in clubs that highlight the role that politics can have on society. The role that politics has on culture...

I want to see a removal of politics from the discussion of social issues. I genuinely believe it has less to do with left vs. right and has everything to do with your cultural and civilizational background. "Leans left" and "leans right" are broad terms that don't cover every issue.

What have you learned (or are learning) that has made a difference to you?

Classes I've taken have both confirmed what I thought about an issue while also broadening my mind as to how certain things work. For example, I didn't know how certain events led to other historical events.

My experience of being physically present at MWCC has taught me about the value of human interaction. I had been this huge introvert who withdrew from social interactions, but I began



defining myself as someone who enjoys more contact than I did previously. Human contact and interaction really mean something to me now – it means that I have plenty of people to talk with and interact with and now, more than ever, that's something I really enjoy.

What advice do you have for incoming students?

One thing I would recommend is that – as difficult as it may be to admit that the level of interest correlates with how much you succeed you experience, it has been shown that if you are interested in the subject, it is going to feel easier to excel in that topic than in an area that is of less interest.

What is your plan for after graduation?

Still in progress! Still planning!

How has Covid impacted your schooling and advice you would give to others?

Work is handled entirely differently – entirely online. In terms of academic efficiency, no negative effects. From human interaction standpoint, my ability to interact with other human beings has been negatively impacted. Advice? If you have a way to access virtual meetings, engage with as many as you are able to!

Tips for Frugal Living

by Angela Snyder

Visions Academic Advisor

We're excited to share with you some fun tips for saving money and living frugally as a college student. These tips come from your favorite TRIO counselors, but we know you all have many more money saving secrets to share. We'd love to hear from you so please feel free to contact us at asnyder1@mwwc.mass.edu or visit our Blackboard or Facebook page and leave your best money saving tips to be shared with the group at our panel discussion next month! If you don't have any tips, but you do have specific areas you'd like help saving money, feel free to share that as well. We'd love to make this as interactive a discussion as possible, so your input really matters!

Our first tip is to **create a budget and stick to it**. When you are creating a budget you take into account your specific spending and saving goals. When you allocate money for each area of spending the allocation will reflect those goals, and it is always best to operate within these parameters. If you don't have a budget, it can be very easy to get off track with your spending. Your budget does not have to be fancy or elaborate. A basic detailing of the money coming in vs. money going out can help you get a better understating of what money you have available to spend so you can make informed choices.

Here are some ideas on how to stretch your dollar.

Shopping

Buy clothes second hand. Get to know your local thrift stores. There are even online second hand boutiques like Poshmark and Thread Up where you can find used clothing with plenty of life left in it. Facebook Marketplace is another great place to find clothing items. Do a quick search before you buy retail.

Sell items you are no longer using: This has never been easier! Facebook Marketplace is a magical place where you can find and sell anything from kitchen appliances, to winter coats to school

supplies. You name it, you can find it on Marketplace. Also, local yard sale sites can be a treasure trove! Your trash is another man's treasure, might as well try and sell your old items before making the trip to donate them, you could make some money!

Borrow before you buy. There are a ton of town-wide borrowing sites on Facebook and Nextdoor. If you're looking for something you think you'll only need once, ask to borrow it first!

Reusable items save money. You can find some great alternatives to disposable or single use items online and they can be really affordable when you add up the cost of purchasing the disposable item several times. Straws and reusable snack baggies are a great example.

Measure twice, buy once. Getting out the ruler can save a lot of time and money when buying online. Learning how to take measurements for furniture or clothing can allow you to shop for these items and reduce the need for returns.

Return policy rules. Review the company's return policy before you make any purchases. You may need to return an item. Knowing what that looks like will help you decide whether or not you should be purchasing from this company.

Hit Subscribe. Set up a separate email for promotions and coupons. Many companies will send you coupon codes for subscribing to their mailing lists. Setting up a separate email will make it easier for you to manage these deals and not overwhelm your primary email account.

Food

Stretch your meal with a few staples. Adding eggs, frozen veggies and hot sauce (and only half the seasoning packet) to ramen noodles makes for a larger and healthier meal for only a few cents extra.

Macaroni and cheese and most boxed/frozen dinners can be supplemented with frozen vegetables to make the meal go further and deliver a more impressive nutritional profile.

Cook once, eat twice. Plan to make two to three bigger meals per week which can be portioned out to have for lunch and dinner more than once.

Sale Flyer saves the day! Look up a grocery sale flyer online and plan your meals for the week around what's on sale. You'll save money and often end up with more variety in your diet.

Entertainment

USE YOUR LIBRARY. They have so much more than books!

I couldn't love this tip more, our local library is such a life line for my family. They provide all kinds of discounted passes to local attractions, zoos, museums and cultural centers, so be sure to check out your local library website before booking tickets.

Podcasts there are seriously so many podcasts out there, you're bound to find something that interests you!

Cut the cord! The cable cord! Think about utilizing digital streaming services available for much cheaper than cable.

YouTube and Pinterest can be such a plethora of information for anything from at home workouts to DIY home improvement projects.

YouTube is an incredible Self-Care tool with countless meditations, yoga and breath work routines (and more) available for free.

Want to hear more money saving tips like these from your friendly TRIO staff? Join us on **Thursday November 19th at 5pm for our Frugal Living Panel**. If you're looking for a guide on how to navigate the holidays on a shoestring you can catch us at it again on **Monday December 7th from 12:30-1:30** when we'll discuss our favorite tips to create a special holiday without breaking the bank.

November & December 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 Cycle 2: Classes Begin Virtual Open Lab Registration 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Current Student Registration Begins	3 Virtual Open Lab Registration 1:30 -3:30 p.m.	4 So You Think You Can't Be Scammed? Thank Again! 12:30-1:30 p.m.	5	6	7
8	9 Full Semester: Last day to withdraw Cycle 2: Last to add classes or drop classes with 100% refund	10	11 Veterans Day celebrated: No classes all campuses, day and evening	12	13	14
15	16	17 Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw with a 50% refund	18 Transfer Seminar: Transfer Basics 9-10 a.m. Transfer Seminar for Healthcare Majors 9-10 a.m.	19 Financial Literacy Seminar—Frugal Living 5-6 p.m.	20	21
22	23	24	25 Campus Offices will close at 12:00 p.m.	26	27	28
Thanksgiving Holiday: No classes all campuses, day and evening						
29	30	December 1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw Holidays on a Shoestring Budget 12:30-1:30 p.m.	8	9 End of Semester Gathering 12:30-1:30 p.m.	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Fuel for Finals—Stress Relief Activities						
20	21	22	23 Full Semester & Cycle 2: Last day of classes	24 Campus offices will close at 12:00 p.m.	25 MWCC Closed	26
27	28	29	30	31 Campus offices will close at 12:00 p.m.	January 1, 2021 MWCC Closed	
<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> <p>The Visions & Rx Programs are funded by TRIO Student Support Services grants through the U.S. Department of Education</p>					<p>Join Us on Zoom All workshops, seminars and events will be hosted on Zoom. See your weekly e-letter for the Zoom links for upcoming events</p>	