

TRiO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

November & December 2021

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

Important Information

by Gaurav Khanna

Director, TRIO SSS Programs

Even though it feels like the fall semester just got started, we are well in the midst of planning for spring 2022! After so much time spent virtually it finally feels like there might be some light at the end of the tunnel.

As you are probably aware, starting January 2022, all Massachusetts community colleges will require all students on campus to be fully vaccinated in addition to all faculty and staff. I normally use this space to highlight important events, dates, and program changes. Today, I'd like to make an appeal for those of you still on the fence to get the vaccine. While we care about your ability to come to school and academic success we care more about you as a person and want you to be healthy and well. All of the data shows that vaccines are the best way to protect ourselves and those we care about from this illness that has taken more than 700,000 American lives.

Locations to get the shot can be found at <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/>. There is also

a great deal of questionable information on the vaccines. If you are looking for additional information, the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>) is a good place to start. MWCC is currently developing a process to fulfill this requirement and will send out more details once they are finalized.

Staffing: We are close to hiring someone to fill Dawn's position and hope to have someone in the role during November. In the meantime the rest of the staff is here and available to help you with any questions or provide general support.

Registration: Registration has been delayed to November 15. Please set up an advising meeting with an advisor so you can plan your classes for the spring and enroll as soon as registration opens. This will allow you to pick out your preferred schedule for next semester.

Graduation/Transfer/Taking a Break: 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 seven 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 in 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 15

by Amy Moury
Rx Retention Specialist

Spring semester starts
Wednesday January 19th.
Let's get you into a schedule
that works for you!

PREPARE

- Review Degree Works for your degree or certificate. What classes do you have left? Are there pre-requisite classes?
- Think about your life outside of school. How many classes can you realistically take? Would you prefer in-person or online?

PLAN

- Look at the course listings. Are the classes you need offered in spring? What format are the classes in?
- Create a draft schedule. Write down the CRNs of the classes you want to register for.

REGISTER

- *Pick one of the options below to register.*
- Meet with an advisor in Rx or Visions who will discuss all of these questions with you.
- Self-register on iConnect. If you do this, email or meet with your advisor to double check that the courses you chose make sense for you.

CHECK YOUR FINANCIAL AID

- Log into iConnect to view your bill and choose if you want a bookstore voucher.
- If you are registered for 9 or more credits and have not yet done so for the 2021-2022 academic year, complete the health insurance waiver.
- Set up a payment plan, if needed.
- Contact your advisor or Student Financial Services if you have questions.

FINISH FALL STRONG

- Focus on having a successful fall semester so that you are ready to tackle spring classes!

Create a Connection

by Sarah Kipp
Learning Specialist--Writing

Do you ever think about what motivates us to want to learn, grow, and change? Richard Ryan and Edward Deci are two researchers who identified three things that influence how self-determined a person is: competence, relatedness (connection), and autonomy. In other words, we tend to be more engaged in learning when we feel like we are able to do something (competence), we have choice in what we are doing (autonomy), and we are connected (relatedness) to the person or people from whom we are learning. Ryan and Deci also found that when any one of these psychological needs is not met, people may have a harder time engaging in learning and growing.

In our October 2021 newsletter, Amy Moury wrote a helpful article that included strategies for success in NOMEET classes. NOMEET classes are held online and do not have required class times. One of the suggestions that Amy offered was to find a way to meet your professor—by showing up to office hours or scheduling an appointment to meet. According to Ryan and Deci's research, creating a connection with your professor can influence how well you connect with

the content and learn the material! Helping your professor get to know you—and your unique learning strengths and challenges—can also go a long way in making sure that you have what you need to be successful in the course. While the pandemic may have shifted how we relate and connect to one another, the basic psychological need for relatedness continues to be important for how we engage in learning. Feeling seen and known by a professor—and seeing and knowing your professor—may take a little extra effort on your part but creating a connection with your professor has the potential to make a big difference in how successful you are in the course!



Ways to Connect with Your Professor:

- **Attend office hours:** This is a great time to talk with your professor about questions, ideas and concepts in the class. This can also be a great time to talk with them about the field, finding employment as a graduate and steps you can take now to be prepared for the field.
- **Participate in class:** Being engaged is a great way to stand out. If you are in a Zoom class and can turn on your camera, do so! Use the chat feature if you to engage in discussions and to ask questions.
- **Schedule a one-on-one appointment:** Think about advice you want to ask your professor and reach out via email to set up an individual meeting. This can be a great way to build your professional network

Are you a Leader?

by Amy Moury & Lauren Clifford
Retention Specialists

Do you consider yourself a leader or are you looking to improve those skills? Leadership comes in many different styles, and anyone can improve their leadership skills to use personally or professionally. In the spring, we will offer our Leaders Program which is a multi-week seminar series designed for self-exploration and development of leadership skills. A previous participant had this to say about TRIO Leaders.

"My biggest hesitation going into the program was if I had what it takes to be a leader but I learned that a leader doesn't have to have all the answers or all the skills. A good leader allows their entire team to flourish and ensures everyone is respected and valued."

"I would recommend the Leaders Program to any friend. I believe any student would benefit from being in such a positive and encouraging environment. Students

with and without experience being in a leadership role would find this program beneficial to their skill set. You'll share ideas and experiences with like-minded peers and end the program with new friends."

Watch your MWCC email for more information about the Leaders Program, or reach out to Amy Moury or Lauren Clifford who will be facilitating this year's group.



Mid-Semester Slump or Seasonal Affective Disorder?

by Mary Roth
Professional Writing Tutor

As the fall semester reaches its midpoint, many students experience a phenomena known as mid-semester slump, which prevents them from performing at their best. Symptoms include a loss of motivation, trouble organizing their work, and a general sense of tiredness or lack of interest. Students may feel guilty over this slump, blame themselves for their lack of motivation or label themselves as “lazy” or “not smart enough.” Unfortunately, this phenomena also coincides with the first rounds of exams and paper, reinforcing the students’ perception of not being motivated or smart enough to succeed in college.

While mid-semester slump is a real thing, many students may be suffering from another less recognized condition: Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD. While fall is a beautiful time of year, it is also a time of dwindling daylight hours, which has a profound effect on people. According to the American Psychological Association, an estimated 6 out of 10 people in the United States suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder. Essentially, because people are exposed to fewer hours of sunlight, they experience a type of seasonal depression. The American Psychological Association identifies SAD as a subcategory of

clinical depression that shares many of the same symptoms, including:

- fatigue
- pervasively sad mood
- loss of interest
- sleep difficulty, or excessive sleeping
- craving and eating more starches and sweets
- weight gain
- feelings of hopelessness or despair
- thoughts of suicide

(<https://www.apa.org/topics/depression/seasonal-affective-disorder>)

The difference is that SAD is seasonal, and people who suffer from it usually experience it only in the fall and winter months. To manage these symptoms, the American Psychological Association recommends:

Getting more natural sunlight: Taking a walk at lunchtime or sitting by a window while working can increase your exposure to the sunlight you need and make you feel better and more energized

Eating healthy foods: Avoid foods that are high in carbohydrates and sugars and try to include foods that are high in fiber and low in fats, such as fruits and vegetables.

Keeping active: Try to move and exercise even if you don’t really feel like it. Exercise has been proven to reduce depression symptoms and improve overall health and learning.

Planning ahead: If you recognize that you may be experiencing SAD, prepare as soon as the fall and winter weather approach. This may mean changing your schedule, adjusting your sleep schedule to get the proper amount of sleep, planning your schedule to include exercise and scheduling your study time for the times you feel most productive.

Seeking professional help: If you are doing all that you can to manage SAD symptoms, but you are still feeling unproductive or overwhelmed, it is time to seek professional help. The College Counselor, Melissa Manzi, can work with you to discuss how you are feeling and connect you to additional resources to help you reach your goals despite mid-semester slump. To reach Melissa, you can call her at [978-630-9178](tel:978-630-9178) or e-mail her at m_manzi@mwcc.mass.edu.

(<https://www.apa.org/topics/depression/seasonal-affective-disorder>)

Counseling Services are confidential and free of charge.

To schedule a counseling session, email Melissa Manzi m_manzi@mwcc.mass.edu with the subject line “counseling.”



Winter Break Check List for Students Transferring for Fall 2022

by Sarah Pingeton

Visions Transfer Counselor

If you're graduating in the spring or next summer and planning on transferring to a 4-year school for next fall, winter break is a great time to get your application process moving without the stress of classes. Here is a check list of things you may want to get done during this time:

- Use a tool like the customizable search at College Board: <https://collegesearch.collegeboard.org/home> or schedule an appointment with a transfer counselor to help you create a list of schools you're interested in.
- Check out the Transfer Advising website <https://mwcc.edu/academics/advising/transfer/fair/> to see if there will be any events or opportunities to

connect with the schools you are interested in throughout the spring semester.

- Go on tours, attend information sessions, or connect with a transfer counselor about how to do those things at the schools you are most interested in.
- Narrow down your list to a final 2-5 you'd like to apply to and use each school's admissions webpage to identify application requirements and deadlines. Think you might qualify as a MassTransfer student? Get application information here: <https://www.mass.edu/masstransfer/a2b/application.asp>
- Start gathering required materials for your applications and keep your

eye on deadlines as the spring semester starts!

We're always happy to assist as much as you'd like during this sometimes confusing and overwhelming process. There are lots of wonderful opportunities, and the earlier you start investigating the more choices you'll have when it comes to picking your next school!



Seminar Spotlight: From Frazzled to Fierce: The Power of Goal Setting

by Angela Snyder

Visions Academic Advisor

How are you doing on those goals you set for 2021? Are you feeling like you could use a little inspiration as we close out the year, so you can finish strong? Maybe you've gotten off track and now you need a restart. Or maybe you're new to goal setting all together. Whatever the motivator, we're excited to invite you to join us for From Frazzled to Fierce: The Power of Goal Setting with the TRIO office!

We will be starting with the basics by having you complete a Whole Life Assessment to see how you're feeling about all the different areas of your life now, versus how you would like to feel. Doing this Whole Life Assessment will allow us to uncover your specific goals and get a better feel for where you should focus your energies first. Once

we know which areas of your life you'd like to work on, we will teach you how to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed) goals that will get you to the end result you're working towards. We will teach you all the tips and tricks necessary to refine and set powerful goals and get a realistic plan in place to start smashing them right away!

This workshop is a MUST if you are looking to get out of survival mode and step into thriving mode! You can do it, and you deserve to do it. Who says you have to wait until the New Year to set goals? Kick start the new you with us on Tuesday, November 30 at 5:00 p.m. We can't wait to see you there!

From Frazzled to Fierce: The Power of Goal Setting

**Tuesday
November 30
5:00 p.m.**

Virtual Office
<https://bit.ly/rxvisionsonline>

Study Skills: Active Listening

by Rachel Davis
Staff Assistant

Have you ever been in a conversation and by the end of it your mind is elsewhere? If you missed some information or relevant details, it can get confusing or make it difficult to understand. Active listening is a learning skill that helps with acquiring new information.

For example, if you are participating in a study group and someone is explaining or summarizing a lesson, it is important to stay connected and engage. That is one of the best ways to really take advantage of that learning opportunity. You can start by giving that person all your attention, but if there is a distraction or something takes away your focus, it is going to create a disconnect. That does

happen and it is okay... you can just come back to it and try again. One way of doing that is asking for clarification if you didn't get something or want to know more about it. Asking questions will get you closer to the answers you need to better understand what it is you are learning. Practicing these study skills can help establish better comprehension of what you are learning. It has the potential to improve your learning experience when you feel connected and empowered with the knowledge you gained.

A few key points to remember:

Engage – stay connected in conversation

Ask questions – get the clarification you need to understand it

What to think about moving forward:

Be present – show up and be there to follow through

Stay organized – create & maintain a learning environment that promotes growth



College Navigator Program

The Easterseals College Navigator program assists students to advocate for their needs, identify barriers and access college services and resources to successfully reach graduation. This program provides individual services to college students with disabilities based on their goals, strengths and needs to help them build lifelong skills. Services can be delivered in-person, virtually, or through a hybrid model to best meet the student's needs. These services can complement and expand on the services available through MWCC.

For more information, contact Kiana Plouffe at kplouffe@eastersealsma.org or Alexandra Ullrich at aullrich@eastersealsma.org or visit navigator.eastersealsma.org



End of Semester Checklist

- ✓ Study for exams
- ✓ Finish papers & projects
- ✓ Eat & sleep well
- ✓ Connect with friends & classmates
- ✓ Register for Spring 2022 (or let your TRIO advisor know your plans!)
- ✓ Check your email daily
- ✓ Check Blackboard

November & December 2021 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 Cycle 2: Classes Begin	2	3 First Generation Panel 12:30 p.m. Zoom	4 Academic CPR 3:00 p.m. Zoom	5	6
7	8 Full Semester: Last day to withdraw Cycle 2: Last to add classes or drop classes with 100% refund	9 What You Need to Know About Student Loans with MEFA 4:00 p.m. Zoom	10 Registering for Classes 12:30 p.m. Zoom	11 Veterans Day No classes all campuses	12	13
14	15	16 Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw with a 50% refund Protect Your Identify and your \$\$ 12:30 p.m. See email for Zoom link	17 Frugal Living 3:00 p.m. Zoom	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Campus Offices will close at 12:00 p.m.	25	26	27
Thanksgiving Holiday: No classes all campuses, day and evening						
28	29 Transfer Seminar 12:30 p.m. Transfer Seminar for Healthcare Majors 12:30 p.m. Zoom	30 From Frazzled to Fierce! The Power of Goal Setting 5:00 p.m. Zoom	December 1 Finals Countdown 12:30 p.m. Zoom	2	3	4
5	6 Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw	7 End of Semester Gathering 12:30 Zoom	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Fuel for Finals—Stress Relief Activities						
19	20	21	22	23 Full Semester & Cycle 2: Last day of classes	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	January 1, 2022 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 in the Virtual Office</p> <p>Visit the Virtual Office for online tutoring and workshops and to schedule appointments https://bit.ly/rxvisionsonline</p>	