

TRiO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

October 2021

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

Falling into Success

by Gaurav Khanna
Director, TRIO SSS Programs

It's been great to see all of our students start the new semester with enthusiasm. We have a great mix of new and returning students this year and we love seeing all of you! Beginning of semester check ins are a great way to do that—if you have not had one yet, please connect with us so we can chat.

Though we are seeing increased student presence on campus all our services are still being offered online as well as in person. Our physical office in room 134 is open from 8-4 Monday through Friday and the virtual office at <https://bit.ly/rxvisionsonline> is open 9-6 Monday to Thursday and 8-4 on Fridays. Both are open for drop in visits but our physical space is capacity limited so you may have to wait if you do not have an appointment.

We're also excited to restart transfer visits to four-year schools. This semester we are tentatively planning on visiting UMass Amherst, Worcester State University, and Fitchburg State

University. If you are thinking about transfer, please connect ASAP with Sarah Pingeton or Alaina Lucchetti to take part in the trips. We are able to offer transportation to students who are comfortable sharing proof their fully vaccinated status. If you are not comfortable sharing that proof, we have arranged to offer reimbursement for students to transport themselves.

Coming up, October includes four-week assessments from your faculty and mid-semester reviews with Rx and Visions staff to share that information with you and plan for your success for the rest of the semester. Watch your email for more details.

We have had some staffing changes in the office. Kayla Coates and Dawn Babineau have accepted other positions at the college. We have active searches underway to fill both those positions but you can still reach out to any other staff member for support.

If achieving success were as easy as falling into it, everyone would be successful. For most of though, it takes putting in the work and getting help when needed. This is the time of the semester when things start becoming challenging—assignments for multiple classes, exams, papers and everything else you're juggling outside of school. We can't do the work for you but please remember to reach out to us if you have questions or need support—we are here for you!



FAFSA Opens for 2022-2023 Academic Year on October 1

by Alaina Lucchetti
Rx Transfer Counselor

When should I submit the FAFSA?

The FAFSA is available every October 1 for the following academic year. Thus, it's time to apply for the 2022 – 2023 FAFSA.

Steps to Filing your FAFSA

1. Go to **FAFSA.ED.GOV**
2. Enter **FSA ID and Password**
3. Click on **2022-2023 FAFSA**
4. Answer questions
5. Use **IRS Retrieval Tool** (if you filed taxes) by entering the address as written on your tax returns
6. Review and submit!

What happens if I apply late?

We encourage you apply early to avoid losing out on college and state grants, to avoid delays in the awarding of your aid, and to ensure that your aid is in place by the bill due dates. If your financial aid is not in place by the start of the semester you are at risk of being dropped from your classes- this can help prevent that!

Is there help for the FAFSA process?

Absolutely! There are several offices ready to help students get the job done.

TRIO, of course! **Rx and Visions advisors are happy to assist.** Plus, we'll be watching to see that you're on top of the process.

Appointments for assistance can also be made with the North Central Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) on the Leominster campus. The number is 978-630-9823.

If you have questions or would like assistance, please stop by the TRIO Complex or call 978-630-9297 to schedule a one-on-one appointment

How to Make the Most of Transfer Fairs

by Sarah Pingeton
Visions Transfer Counselor

In October there will be two Virtual Transfer Fairs available to you as a student at MWCC. These are events where lots of 4-year colleges come together so you can get information about all of the schools you're interested in at once. At an in-person Transfer Fair, you may not need to prepare to attend as you can mill around the tables, listen to admissions representatives talk to other students, and chime in when something triggers a thought or a question for you. For a virtual fair, though, you'll definitely want to go prepared.

Find out if you need to register to attend in advance.

Some transfer fairs will have you register to get a link to log in to be able to access the fair, but others you'll be able to just "drop in" to. Make sure you know what the fair you want to attend requires in advance!

Find out which colleges and universities will be at the fair.

You can get information about the MWCC Transfer Fair (and other transfer

events) [here](#). Only attend fairs with schools you may be interested in attending. If you aren't sure, schedule an appointment with a transfer counselor before the transfer fair to explore the options.

Prepare questions. Especially at a virtual fair you don't want to end up in a breakout room one-on-one with an admissions counselor with no questions to ask. Some examples of good questions would be asking if they have the major/minor you're most interested in, asking about clubs, sports, and other activities that are important to you, asking about admissions requirements and transfer agreements, and asking about scholarship opportunities.

You can choose to attend virtual transfer fairs, or virtual visits from individual schools throughout the fall semester. For any of these events you want to be sure you're presenting yourself in a somewhat professional way, so be sure to be aware of your background, your surroundings

(noise!), and how you're dressed (you don't need a shirt and tie or anything, but dressing at least as nicely as you would for an in-person class or day at work is a good place to start). Don't miss out on these great opportunities now that you know how to prepare!

MWCC Transfer Fair

Tuesday, October 19, 2021
10:30a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Talk to admissions
representatives from 50
colleges and universities!

Are You Struggling in NOMEET Classes?

by Amy Moury

Rx Retention Specialist

Many of our classes in fall 2021 are no meet, meaning there are no required class times. There may be optional study groups or virtual office hours, but you do not attend class in the traditional sense. Some students thrive on this model because of the flexibility it provides in their busy lives. Other students struggle because of the lack of structure and connection to a real person. If you are in that group, please read some of my suggestions to be successful!

Manage your time. This is probably the most important of the list. You need to set a schedule that allows you time to do all of the required coursework. If assignments are due Sunday evenings, schedule time in the days before that to complete the assignments. If there is a paper due in a month, plan what needs to be done each week to meet the due date. Learning how to manage your time and stick to a schedule will be imperative in your success in online classes.

Meet your professor. Most of them should have office hours or availability to meet with students. Show up to office hours or schedule an appointment. This is your chance to meet them, ask questions about the syllabus and course setup, and to talk

about the content of the course. Plan on attending office hours or having a standing appointment every week. Consider this your "class time", and be prepared with assignments, questions, and material to review. If you want a connection to your professor, make it happen.

Explore Blackboard. Read the syllabus, click on every tab, open every link, and get yourself comfortable with the setup. If you start a new job, you want to know how do I punch in, who are your co-workers, where is the break room, etc. Take the same approach to a class. Get to know the professor and course by exploring everything. While you explore, write down questions to follow up on. Are you clear on how to submit assignments? Where is the access code you need? How do I find the Power Point for this week? Then, once you have a list...

Ask questions. If there is something you don't understand, ask. Professors are not mind readers! They do not know what questions you have unless you tell them. Perhaps a link is broken or a document is not posted. Those are things to bring up; they are often honest mistakes! Is an assignment or a reading confusing? Ask your professor for clarification or explanation. None of



your questions are silly or unimportant. If it's a question you're asking, it deserves an answer.

Know your resources. Your professor is always the first place to start if you need support. But if your schedules don't align or you need more than what a professor can offer, connect with your advisor in the Rx or Visions programs. We can help with any of these strategies above as well as other organization or time management techniques. Meet with us early and often to get the necessary information for you to be successful in your classes!

It is really easy to give up when you are struggling in a no-meet class. But no-meet classes are NOT impossible. They are just different than what you're used to! Use these tips and the advice of your counselors in Rx and Visions to learn what you can do to be successful in any type of course.

Rx Mid-Semester Gathering

Wednesday, October 27
12 :30-1 :30 p.m.



Visions Mid-Semester Gathering

Thursday, October 28
12 :30 p.m. - 1 :30 p.m.

See What They Said!

by Sarah Kipp

Learning Specialist--Writing

Deaf and hard-of hearing individuals are not the only people who benefit from being able to see what is being said on videos, television shows, and movies. Visual learners, individuals with auditory processing challenges, and people who benefit from accessing information through more than one modality may also appreciate being able to see what is being spoken. For those of you who want to see what is being said—and perhaps even revisit those words at another time—here are two strategies that go beyond turning on the television's closed captioning option!

Zoom

Did you know Zoom has a captioning feature? The host of the meeting needs to turn on this feature in their account settings and then, when they start the meeting, they need to select "enable live transcription." As long as the host

has turned live transcription on, meeting participants can decide whether or not they want to view captioning throughout the meeting. If one person chooses to view captioning, and another participant does not, only the participant who has clicked on captioning will see the words come across their screen. The accuracy of the captioning is impressive; mistakes are usually minimal. The best part? If the meeting is recorded and live transcription is activated, a full transcript of the meeting will be generated! The transcript file can be found in the same location where the recording and the audio file of the meeting are saved after the meeting ends. This also provides a wonderful way to be able to review the contents of the meeting without having to watch the whole recording!

Videos

Many instructors share content with their students through videos and/or narrated PowerPoints posted to Blackboard. Want a time-saving hack? (Note: if you are using Zoom or something else that is using your microphone or speakers, you need to close that application before attempting this hack!) Open up a Microsoft Word document or a Google doc. Make sure the dictate feature is activated and that you know where the on-screen microphone button is located in the document. On the same device, open up the video you need to watch. Turn on the dictate feature/microphone in the Word document. (This is the same button you would use to change your speech into text in the document.) Hit play on the video. Watch the spoken content of the video turn into typed words on your screen! The transcription is not perfect; there are no periods, and all the sentences will run together. Yet, many find this work-around to be a huge help when trying to comprehend and revisit the spoken content of a video.

Study Skills

by Beshoy Lawindy

Professional Math Tutor

Studying can be one of the hardest things to do at times. Everyone lives a busy life with responsibilities outside of school. The thought of just sitting there reading your textbook, re-watching lectures, or even finding the motivation to start can all be tough. But with the right study skills your study time can be something you look forward to.

Planning Ahead: One of the best ways to study is to carve out time that is free for you to study during. Having that time blocked out when you do not have any responsibilities or prior obligations can be the make or break between an effective study session and a waste of time. Putting important times like this into a calendar can also help you better organize your time and

set you up for a more productive session.

Environment: Environment plays a big role in how efficiently you are studying. Some people prefer coffee shops with background noise or at a desk with some music playing, whereas other people prefer to study in complete silence. Figuring out what works best for you is one of the fun parts about learning. Another way your environment can affect your study skills is whether or not you prefer to study in a group, with one other study partner, or all on your own. Be honest with yourself and make sure you stay focused and you will only be rewarded for your hard work.

Motivation: Keep yourself motivated while you are studying. Studying for hour can be a challenge, but if you can stay motivated then you have already won half the battle. The best ways to stay motivated are by

taking breaks or working towards something. Some people will study for a solid 25 minutes and give themselves a 5 minute break and then repeat the cycle until they have accomplished everything they were hoping to. Others like to tell themselves "if I get through X chapters then I will go out and grab a coffee after". Having these mini goals can give you a short term reward that can motivate you to get things done. But at the end of the day remember what you are working to become. A better version of yourself!

Studying is one of those things that everyone has had to do one point in their lives. If you are proactive about studying it can really do wonders for you in the long run. Falling behind, losing motivation, or being unorganized are all forms of you being a self-saboteur. Learning what study strategies work for you will set you up for success and make you an overall better student!

Informational Interviews: Researching the Path to Your Dream Career

by Lauren Clifford

Visions Retention Specialist

Many students come to me looking for more information on their ideal job or career. Though I'm always willing to help, the best resource is someone who has walked that path before. **If you are trying to determine your long term goal job or what steps to take to get to your desired end point, informational interviews may be your answer!**

What is an informational interview?

An informational interview is when you interview someone who has knowledge about a particular subject in order to learn from their experience or expertise. In this case it is you (the student) interviewing a professional in a field you are considering going into.

Who should be doing these?

EVERYONE! It doesn't matter if you are set on your path or if you are weighting several options. Getting to know another professional in your field of interest is always helpful.

But I don't know anyone in this field?

That's okay! Most people won't and this is a great way to start networking. You can use LinkedIn or Indeed to find companies that hire in your chosen field. Then go to the company's website and find some contact information and start making calls or emails. I know it can be stressful to make cold calls/emails, but I promise most people love to talk about their experiences. Worst case is that they may be too busy and not answer, so find yourself a couple of people to contact.

What do I say? Be professional and courteous no matter your format, but you'll want to draft up something like this "Hello, My name is _____. I am

currently a/an ____ major at MWCC. I am very interested as getting a job as a _____ in the future. I was wondering if you would be willing to talk with me about your experience." If they say yes have a plan ready to offer for how you would like to conduct the interview (phone, zoom, etc.)

What do I ask? You will want to have a list of questions ready when you do your interview; you may or may not use them all, but you should still have them ready. Some might depend on your career area, but here are some general ones to get you started:

- Where did you attend school? What degrees/certifications do you have?
- What jobs did you have before this one that helped you get to where you are now?
- What advice would you give to someone looking to enter the field?
- Is there something you wish you had known before you started pursuing this field?
- What is your favorite part of your job? What is the most challenging part?

Need help? Don't be afraid to reach out to your Visions or Rx advisor for help with this process!



Your October Checklist

- ✓ Schedule your **mid-semester check-in** and **four-week assessment** review
- ✓ Attend and **participate in all classes**
- ✓ **Complete your 2022-2023 FAFSA**
- ✓ Attend your program's **Mid-Semester Gathering**
- ✓ Attend at least **one seminar**
- ✓ Read the weekly **eletter**
- ✓ **Check your email daily**
- ✓ Think about your **Spring 2022 Registration**, which begins Nov. 1
- ✓ Take time to rest and enjoy the fall weather



Student Spotlight: Jailene Lopez

by Sara Pingeton

Visions Transfer Counselor

Jailene is a Visions student who is set to finish her degree in Elementary Education in 2022. Jailene has navigated many obstacles to get to where she is, often working two jobs to support herself while also working hard towards her dreams. Despite the circumstances, Jailene sets the bar for dedication and commitment and is always optimistic. Her enthusiasm is inspiring, and it is an absolute honor to get to work with her and be a small part of her journey.

Here is a little more about Jailene in her own words!

Tell us a little bit about you.

Hello everyone! My name is Jailene and I graduated high school in 2015. I started my college journey fall 2020 through MWCC. As of right now my major is in LAS Elementary Education Track.

What has been the greatest challenge for you at MWCC so far?

So far, my greatest challenge at MWCC has been this current semester due to the workload in my courses.

How did you overcome that challenge?

I am working on overcoming these challenges through organization and planning ahead. Each week I schedule myself certain days for specific courses, and plan out which assignments need to be done according to when they are due.

What are your educational goals?

My educational goals are to get my Associates Degree in Elementary Education, and then when I transfer fall 2022, I would like to change my major to English & Education so I may become a middle school English teacher. I also take great interest in Journalism, possibly teaching the subject or working closely with the school newspaper.

What do you think is the most important key to your success here at MWCC?

The most significant key to my success here at MWCC is to study, complete my course work on time and reaching out to professors, tutors, and advisers when I am in need of further assistance. This process will confirm I am putting in the most effort which will eventually



lead to great accomplishments and achievements.

What advice would you give to students just starting out?

My advice to students who are just beginning their journey is to assemble course work accordingly, schedule plan of actions ahead to accomplish assignments strongly and well timed. Always communicate when you are in need of help and take all the assistance you are offered.

What's your favorite part about being a student at MWCC?

My favorite part about being a student at MWCC is how much the faculty and staff genuinely care for you as a student and personally. Specifically, I would like to thank the Visions Program for continuously checking in and offering/providing services when I need them most.

Rest is Productive

When juggling many priorities and a demanding schedule, it may feel like every moment needs to be dedicated to a task.

Make sure to take some time to rest. This may mean going for a walk, taking a nap or doing something that you enjoy!



Self-Care Workshop

Guest Speaker, Melissa Manzi,
MWCC Mental Health Counselor
Thursday, October 14
12:30- 1:30 p.m.
[Virtual Office](#)

Learn strategies to relax and refresh, especially during a busy semester.

October 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
	Success Tip: Transcribe this page into your planner, or print this page and put it in a place where you'll see it every day!				1	2
3	4	5 TEAS Workshop 12:30 p.m. RM 115	6	7 Cycle 1 Last day to withdraw Transfer Basics 12:30 p.m. RM S105	8	9
10	11 Columbus Day No classes all campuses day and evening	12	13	14 Self-Care Workshop with Melissa Manzi 12:30 Virtual Office	15	16
17	18	19 Transfer Fair 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Zoom	20 Career Fair 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Register here	21	22	23
24	25	26 Academic CPR 12:30 RM 115 *Pre-Registration is required	27 Cycle 1 Last day of classes Rx Mid-Semester Gathering 12:30 p.m. Virtual Office Growing Money 12:30 p.m. See your email for the Zoom link Halloween Activity 6:00 p.m. Virtual Office	28 Visions Mid-Semester Gathering 12:30 p.m. Virtual Office Registering for Classes 3:00 p.m. Virtual Office	29	30
31 	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 The Visions & Rx Programs are funded by TRIO Student Support Services grants through the U.S. Department of Education					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