

TRiO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

March 2017

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE VISIONS AND RX PROGRAMS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

March Madness

by Gaurav Khanna,

Director of the Visions and Rx Programs

The semester is in full swing and there is a great deal going on inside and outside the TRIO Complex. In this newsletter, you'll find advice on selecting classes and suggestions on removing "clutter" from your life. Don't forget to read our student spotlight. Here is a fast list to keep you on track this March.

Four-Week Assessments

Every semester, we send out assessments to your faculty after the fourth week. We'll email you immediately if your professor alerts us to a concern, or we'll email you when two have been returned. Feel free to ask about your assessments!

FAFSA

If you have not filed your 2017-2018 FAFSA, please do so! By filing early, you maximize your award eligibility. April 1st is the deadline for MWCC grants, and May 1st is the deadline for MassGrants.

MWCC Foundation Scholarships

The MWCC Foundation Scholarship application can be found on iConnect in the AwardSpring app. The deadline for transfer students is March 15th, and the deadline for continuing students is May 24th. If you have questions regarding the application, please stop by the TRIO Complex.

Summer and Fall Registration

March is a great time to start thinking about your plans for summer and fall. Summer and

fall course registration begins April 3rd for continuing students. Sign up for an advising appointment with the Visions and Rx counselors.

Spring Break Trip

On March 15th, the Visions and Rx Programs are taking a trip to the Museum of Science in Boston. We'll charter a bus to take students, with pick-ups at MWCC's Gardner campus as well as the Kmart Plaza in Leominster.

The visit will include admission to the general exhibit as well as Chocolate: The Exhibition. We will also watch an IMAX movie at the Mugar Omni Theater at the museum. Lunch is included.

Stop by the TRIO Complex to sign up with your \$5 deposit that will be returned on the day of the trip. Check your email for more information.

Career Seminar and Career Fair

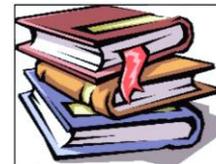
On March 7th, Patricia Brewerton, coordinator of career planning & placement, will host a career seminar for Visions and Rx students. This seminar will be held at 12:30 p.m. in room 345. The seminar will prepare students for the career fair on March 29th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the South Café. The career fair is a great opportunity to meet potential employers in your community.

As always, check your email for more information or stop by the TRIO Complex.



Registering for Classes

Lisa and Dawn share strategies to get the most out of your course registration. Visit page 2 for more information.



Decluttering Your Life

Catherine and Lisa share their life pro-tips. Read their strategies on page 3.

Join the Visions and Rx Leaders as they host and present the Mid-Semester Gatherings.

Rx Mid-Semester Gathering

Tuesday, March 21, 2017
12:30-1:30 p.m.
North Café

Visions Mid-Semester Gathering

Wednesday, March 22, 2017
12:30-1:30 p.m.
North Café



978-630-9297
Room 134
mwcc.edu/trioss

AA/EEO Institution

Which Classes to Pick: A Registration Guide

by Lisa Naze

Rx Transfer Counselor

It's hard to believe that even though the spring semester just started, we need to think about registering for summer and fall classes. Many students don't realize that when they register for classes they need to think about not only that semester but beyond as well. For example, not every class is offered in every semester, so make sure that you plan appropriately. Will you have financial aid for the summer? If you plan to continue your education, think about classes that will transfer to your four-year institution. It's also important to check Degree Works to make sure the classes you are registering for are needed for your degree. Here are some common questions asked by students during the registration period.

Can I register myself?

Although you can register yourself through WebConnect, it's always a good idea to meet with your advisor to go over your classes and education plan before registering. There are

certain cases when students will need an override and an advisor will have to register them. Make an appointment with your advisor before registration opens so that you can assure a spot in a class that may fill quickly.

Can I take all of my classes online?

We offer many online classes which can be a convenient choice for students with busy schedules. However, not all classes are offered online. For example, most four-credit science classes require a lab and are not offered online. Taking a web class requires self-discipline and motivation. It also requires a reliable computer and internet access, and some classes may require certain software. Always check the notes in the class schedule to find out what you will need.

What's the difference between a cycle class and full semester class?

During fall and spring semester some classes are offered as a full-semester and some are offered in cycles. A full-semester class will go the full 15 weeks while a cycle class will run for 7.5 weeks. Cycle classes have the same expectation and cover the same amount of material as a full-semester class but at a faster pace and with longer class times. We generally recommend students not take more than two cycle classes at a time.

What is intersession?

Between the fall and spring semesters, courses are offered in two week blocks. These are fast paced classes that meet Monday - Friday for two weeks after the fall and spring semesters in longer class blocks. Not all classes are offered during intersession and require a large commitment to the class days and times.

How long are summer classes?

Summer class times can vary. Most summer cycle classes run about five weeks. Full summer classes run about 10.5 weeks. Keep in mind the classes go at a faster pace and not all classes are offered in the summer.

What's the Story with State-Supported Courses?

by Dawn Babineau

Visions Learning Specialist

Often students see courses identified as "state-supported" on the course listing tool and will wonder what this means and how it relates to them.

What are state-supported courses and who is eligible for tuition waivers?

The Massachusetts legislature has approved a number of tuition waiver opportunities. Recipients must meet certain criteria and need to provide proof of eligibility. Some individuals or groups possibly eligible for the waiver include veterans, Mass Rehabilitation and DCF participants. Also, if you or a family member work for the state system or you are a recipient of the John and Abigail Adams scholarship, you should explore this option. These are just some of the possible affiliations that meet eligibility. Check with the Financial Aid Office to learn more about your eligibility.

How much will it take off my bill?

Your bill includes both a tuition (per credit) and a fee component. Generally, the waiver will remove the **tuition** portion of your bill. As an example, this spring a three-credit course

carried a "tuition" cost of \$75. If you are in four classes, this can add up to \$300 off your bill.

Other expectations

In order to be eligible, students must be in a degree or certificate program, must be taking at least three credits per semester and must be making satisfactory academic progress. You must also meet state and citizenship requirements, not be in default of a student loan and be in compliance with the Selective Service laws.

Frequent Assumptions

1. If you receive any form of financial aid you must take state-supported classes. **NOT TRUE.** Standard financial aid has many of the same expectations, but the eligibility criteria is different. When receiving financial aid, you are **not** restricted to only state-supported options.

2. If an instructor is listed as providing a state-supported course all of their classes will meet the same criteria. **NOT TRUE.** Course attributes may vary, so use the course listing tool as your guide.

3. If I am eligible for state-supported classes, I must take them. **NOT TRUE.** It's in your best interest to save a little money, but if scheduling is an issue, you can go with whichever class meets your needs.

4. State-supported classes are restricted to only those eligible. **NOT TRUE.** You can take the class, but you will not receive the reduction in tuition.

5. All classes are state-supported if I meet the criteria. **NOT TRUE.** The specific CRN number you would like to take must be listed as state-supported in the course listing.

6. Only Gardner has state-supported options. **NOT TRUE.** While more limited, there are options for state-supported classes on other campuses and online.

If you have other questions or need more clarification, please stop by the TRIO Complex and we can discuss your particular situation.



Registration for Summer
and Fall Classes Begins
April 3.

Student Spotlight: Rachel Adams

by Heidi Cruz

Visions Learning Specialist- Writing

Rachel Adams grew up in Fitchburg, MA where she has been a lifelong resident. While attending Monty Tech, she was involved in the culinary program and this influenced her to start thinking about her future during her teenage years. At the age of 16, Rachel was diagnosed with fibromyalgia, a syndrome that affects the muscles and soft tissue that results in chronic pain and tenderness. Rachel found it hard to get out of bed some days because of her fibromyalgia and coping with the pain. She struggled during high school both with her grades and the environment due to the symptoms associated with fibromyalgia.

However, one day Rachel decided she was not going to allow fibromyalgia to control her or her outlook at life. She made a vow to herself she was going to pursue her goals and dreams by going to college and having a more positive outlook on life. Rachel has since then found a way to control the symptoms of her fibromyalgia through medicine, but she still experiences occasional flare ups. However, she has not let this stop her. She says her

decision to change her outlook on life is reflected in her current grades and involvement on campus.



Rachel wasn't sure where she wanted to go to college, so she chose to attend MWCC as a stepping stone to put her dreams into motion. She decided to pursue an associates in business with the thought she might someday open her own restaurant. However, her vision for her future changed after she took Business Law I with Professor Korman. She now wants to become a lawyer and work in criminal law. Rachel has explored her passions through her involvement in the Legal Studies Club and Alpha Beta Gamma, the business honors society. Last semester, she was the secretary for Alpha Beta Gamma. In the Legal Studies Club, she enjoys traveling to the different court houses and watching trials with her club members.

Last summer, Rachel completed an internship with the district attorney's office in Worcester, MA. She spent most of her summer between the Fitchburg and Gardner courthouses as she met with legal professionals in the area and assisted with organizing and filing paperwork related to certain trials. This made her even more certain of her decision to pursue a career in law.

Rachel credits her family with being her main supporters as she pursues her dreams and wants to make them proud of her achievements. In her spare time, Rachel enjoys going for walks with her dogs, Katie and Wesley, and spending time with her family and friends. She also currently works at Rivercourt Residences, a senior assisted living facility, as a front desk receptionist. She loves her job and meeting everyone she is connected with through her job.

Rachel wants to inspire others with fibromyalgia to not give up on their dreams, and her goal is to prove to herself and others, that everyone can become who they want to be through education and positive experiences. Her dedication and perseverance can serve to inspire anyone.

Owning Your Learning

by Catherine Maddox-Wiley

Rx Retention Counselor

Every now and then students will comment that their professors' teaching styles don't match with their learning styles. However, students are often unaware that they are responsible for *what* they learn and *how* they learn. To enhance your learning, you may have to go beyond what the professor requires. Here are some examples:

1. Do additional readings, assignments or projects, even if they don't carry any credit. If your professor won't accept a late assignment, do the work anyway – for yourself. The long-term knowledge you gain will serve you well in the future.
2. Talk with your professors during their office hours about the material you're covering in class or other related topics. This "scholarly discourse" makes you a student of the world.
3. Network with others who are in your chosen field of study. Connect with other students or professionals.
4. Get involved in a student club, community organization or volunteer agency that expands your knowledge, experience and skill sets.

To be a solid college student, be an active scholar!

Spring Cleaning: Decluttering your life

by Lisa Naze

Rx Transfer Counselor

Excessive clutter can cause stress and impact our everyday lives. Clutter can distract us and weigh us down. However, tackling the clutter can seem like a daunting task, and we often don't know where to start. By devoting a little bit of time each day to get rid of the clutter, we can become more organized, productive, and reduce stress to find more time to enjoy the pleasures in our lives.

Declutter your work area

Clear out not only your work space but your computer as well. Organize your bills, important papers and school materials and put them in designated areas. As papers come in, sort, place, and discard to prevent them from building up. Deleting and organizing the files and programs on your computer can help decrease the visual clutter and allow your computer to run more efficiently.

Declutter your home

Go through your house room-by-room and sort the clutter in the open space, closets and drawers. Sort things into piles: toss, donate or keep, and then organize the items you

decide to keep in drawers and cabinets. Ask yourself when was the last time you used the item and if you really need it. If you aren't sure if you want to keep certain clothing items, after you wear something, hang it in your closet backwards so at the end of the month you can see which clothing items you don't wear.

Declutter your life

With all of the commitments we have between school, work, family, and friends, our lives can become cluttered. Take a few minutes to write down all of your commitments and decide which ones bring you joy and value and are worth the time you invest in them. Learn how to say no when you have other commitments, like work and school. Without structure, life can become hectic and confusing, decreasing your productivity. Write down your weekly tasks and set a schedule and routine. Plan out daily routines and batch tasks together to save time. Having routine and order in your life will help decrease stress and allow you to have more time for the things you enjoy.



444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000

Four-Week Assessments

Every semester, we ask your professors to evaluate your progress. We can then share that feedback with you to make sure that you are on the right track!

Check your MWCC email for notifications that yours are in and then stop by the TRIO Complex to review them!

March 2017 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 TEAS Workshop 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 345	3	4	
5	6	7 Career Seminar 12:30-1:30 p.m. RM 345	8 Cycle 1: Last day of classes	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15 Boston Trip	16	17	18	
Spring Break: No Classes all campuses, day and evening							
19	20 Cycle 2: Classes begin	21 Rx Mid-Semester Gathering 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Café	22 Visions Mid-Semester Gathering 12:30-1:30 p.m. North Café	23	24	25 Cycle 2: Last day to add or drop classes with 100% refund	
26	27	28 Full Semester: Last Day to Withdraw	29	30	31 Cycle 2: Last day to withdraw with a 50% refund		
If you have a disability and require accommodation in order to participate fully in program activities, please contact the program director to discuss your specific needs. Affirmative Action/ Equal Opportunity Institution							