Welcome!

Hello! Welcome to Student Support Services TRIO! As a SSS TRIO student you are an important part of our team, so we want to start by providing you with the tools to perform well as a student. This handbook will explain what SSS TRIO is, what is expected of you as a student of TRIO and this university, and other important office policies and procedures. You will also find some tips and resources to help you.

What are the TRIO programs?

TRIO has existed since the 1960s and was established around the same ideas that fueled the Civil Rights Movement and President Johnson’s “War on Poverty”. TRIO was originally created as a companion to federal financial aid – financial aid gives students the money they needed to attend college and TRIO provides them with the skills and support they need to succeed.

There are 8 different types of TRIO programs that serve slightly different target populations. The other TRIO programs in Billings are: Upward Bound, Veterans’ Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, (all housed at MSU Billings, and another Student Support Services at Rocky Mountain College.

What is Student Support Services?

The short answer is: an academic success program. The long answer is this: Student Support Services is a federally funded program which provides eligible students with tools for academic success. What does this mean? To qualify for the program, students must meet one or more of the three criteria below:

1) First Generation - meaning neither parent graduated with a four-year college degree.
2) Low Income Status – the Department of Education publishes federal guidelines that are provided in the application. For TRIO programs, the income requirements are calculated using taxable income, not net income. The guidelines change each year and are based on 150% of the poverty level.
3) Documented Disability - students must prove they have a disability (as defined by the ADA), by providing documentation by a physician, healthcare professional, or be a client of Vocational Rehabilitation or Disability Support Services.

Students may join SSS TRIO if only one category applies, but two-thirds of our 258 participants need to qualify in two ways. Many of our students fit all three categories. Students must also meet one additional requirement because of the way our program proposal is written:

* The student must also be working toward a bachelor’s degree from our main campus.
  (Associate’s degrees, City College students and students transferring to another university are not eligible.)

What is the Goal of SSS?

Our mission is to promote student retention and graduation. Everything we do is to fulfill that mission. In order to receive funding from the Department of Education, we submit a proposal detailing how we will serve our students and fulfill this mission. The Department of Education awards grant funds based on our proposal so we can pay for services. As we receive grant funds from the
federal government we have to follow all the legislation and regulation that governs the TRIO programs. This is government money, so that means we are required to do a lot of paperwork to document our services to students and the money that we are spending. You will only see a tiny fraction of the documentation that is required of our program, but that is why so much emphasis is placed on correct and timely completion of the paperwork that is required of you. Our SSS program receives more than $300,000 each year and we must be accountable for how all that money is being spent and its impact on students.

The grant proposal submitted to the Department of Education lists several objectives, but the top five are:

1) Identify, select, and maintain 258 eligible SSS TRIO students throughout the academic year. Two-thirds of SSS TRIO 258 participants must meet income eligibility guidelines and have a disability or be first generation college bound. Many students fit all three categories. Program participants at MSUB must also be seeking a bachelor’s degree. Associate degree seeking or students transferring to other institutions are not eligible.

2) To assure 100% of the administrative requirements will be met—including record keeping, reporting, and financial accountability.

3) To assure 80% of each entering cohort will persist (or will have graduated or transferred) to the third semester (or second year).

4) To assure 85% of SSS participants will be in good academic standing (2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale) at the end of the academic year and achieving the necessary academic performance levels to remain in good standing.

5) The SSS Project will ensure that 35% of each year’s cohort will graduate within six years. The national rate for the target student population is approximately 8%-12%.

**How are SSS students selected?**

To determine if a student meets the qualifying criteria, they must fill out an application. Applicants take part in a personal interview to go over the program’s rules and regulations. It is also a time to get to know the student and make sure they are a good fit and have an ability to benefit from our program. We are funded to serve 258 students, so some students may be added to a waiting list if the program is already at capacity. Students who are selected for the program attend an orientation session where they learn more about how SSS TRIO will assist them and what is required of them as a participant. These responsibilities are detailed below. All students are accepted into the program on a provisional basis and must demonstrate their active participation in the program during the first semester. Students who meet all of the program requirements are removed from provisional status. Students who do not fully participate in the program during their first semester may be exited from the program.

**Student Support Services TRIO Expectations and Responsibilities:**

- We are a supportive program designed to support students’ academic endeavors through advocacy, empowerment, and the removal of barriers inhibiting academic completion.
- We model acceptance and respect for all.
- We expect an environment where staff and students exhibit courtesy, respond calmly, honor boundaries, listen, and recognize others’ right to privacy.
• We respect confidentiality.
• We actively listen to and meet students where they are.
• We help students improve their problem solving skills and empower them to become successful independent learners and self-advocates.
• We respond to students within one working day. NOTE: Peer Mentors do not work every day.
• We assist students in developing skills that are necessary in a professional environment.

• We are mandatory reporters.

Student Responsibilities:

• I will attend all of my classes except for very rare emergencies.
• I will take ownership of my academic success and individual growth. I will make progress toward earning my degree.
• I understand that my potential and intelligence are not fixed. I can better myself through hard work, diligent effort, and the successful application of strategies.
• I will be proactive, rather than reactive when seeking help.
• I will meet with my mentor a minimum of three times per semester.
• I respect the time of SSS TRIO staff by scheduling and keeping appointments. I will call at least one hour in advance if I need to cancel an appointment.
• I understand that SSS TRIO is not responsible for personal items left in any of the SSS TRIO space.
• I understand that SSS TRIO has limited resources and that my use limits their availability to other participants. I will use these resources appropriately and return them in a timely manner.
• I understand that SSS TRIO expects behavior that creates an environment where staff and students exhibit courtesy, respond calmly, honor boundaries, listen, and recognize others’ right to privacy.
• I understand that if I indicate risk of harm to self, others, or property, SSS TRIO staff will report concerns as appropriate (Mandatory reporters).
• I understand that my participation in SSS TRIO is voluntary, and if I do not participate in the program, I will relinquish my spot to allow for support to be provided to another student.

SSS TRIO Services:

• Mentoring
• Tutoring/study groups
• Academic assistance
• Referral services
• Preparation for graduation
• Access to instructional equipment
• Reference material
• Financial aid information/scholarship preparation
• Financial literacy information
• Graduate school preparation

**SSS Staff**

The SSS team is made up of a number of staff members that fall into two categories:

**Professional Staff**

1) Director - Oversees the whole program and directly supervises all staff.
2) Academic Coordinator – Supervises all tutor staff, fills tutor requests, and checks out equipment to the students.
3) Academic Counselor – Supervises the mentors and the mentoring program.
4) Program Assistant – Greets students, maintains budget, oversees data entry/filing system and supervises the office aides.

**Part-time Staff**

5) Mentors – The main priority of the mentors is to provide support and encouragement to our students. They are well versed on both campus and community resources and are able to provide students with that information. It is important to note that the mentors are not licensed counselors and provide only referrals if the student is in a crisis situation. If you are approached by a student who appears to be in crisis, let one of the professional staff know.
6) Tutors or Study Group Leaders – Provide academic assistance outside the class room. Hours vary, as some may tutor nights and weekends.
7) Office aides – Staff the front office, answer phones, data entry, etc. These are generally work study students who may or may not be part of the program.
Diversity & Respect in the Office Environment

In the SSS office and on campus in general, we work with all kinds of students. Our students have an endless variety of backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, abilities, religions, sexual orientations and identities, ages, etc. We have students who are parents, who have been to prison, who are from small towns, who are in recovery; the list could go on and on. We strive to be as inclusive as possible of all of our students. We want people to feel comfortable and welcome in our offices, regardless of who they are interacting with.

What does this mean for you? As a student of SSS, you are expected to promote the fair, honest and respectful treatment of all people who walk through our doors. Please be aware of your body language and the words you use. A smile goes a long way toward helping people feel welcome. If you don’t feel it (we all have our days!) fake it. It might seem weird, but in the long run you will notice the difference in your interactions with people, and with time you won’t have to fake it!

Words are powerful. They reflect our attitudes, judgments and our acceptance. Please be aware of the words you use. It is hard to tell what words or phrases might be offensive to the people around you. While no one is expected to be perfect, you are expected to do your best to be aware and respectful of the environment and those around you. Words and phrases like, “retarded, that’s so gay, Indian giver,” or other words and phrases which demean a group of people will not be tolerated. Understand there are words a particular individual may find offensive because of their point of view. You don’t need to know all of these, but be open and understanding if someone tells you. These are learning and teaching moments. They are valuable to all of us as we grow as people and experience the world around us.
Confidentiality

This is an important component not only as our office policy, but at MSU Billings as a whole. There are times when you will be exposed to sensitive information. Also, many of our students have complicated lives and share them with us from time to time. We are relying on you as a fellow TRIO member to maintain confidentiality. Even speaking vaguely about someone could spell disaster. Billings is a relatively small community, and you never know how people are connected.

This doesn’t mean that you can’t tell people that you are a TRIO student; actually we value your help with spreading the message about our program and recruiting others. Just don’t use any names or identifying information about students. In addition, students often share personal information with SSS employees. You may be surprised (or may not be surprised) how few details it can take to identify an individual. Avoid careless mistakes that could compromise confidentiality.

More Details About FERPA

FERPA is the “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended.” Below you will see some key aspects of FERPA and how it relates to MSU Billings.

*Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)*

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, is a federal law which states the following: a written institutional policy must be established, and a statement of adopted procedures covering the privacy rights of students must be made available. The law provides that the institution maintain the confidentiality of student education records.

Montana State University Billings accords all the rights under the law to students who are declared independent. No one outside the institution shall have access to nor will the institution disclose any information from students’ educational records without the written consent of the students except to personnel within the institution, to officials of other institutions where students seek to enroll, to persons or organizations providing students with financial aid, to accrediting agencies carrying out their accreditation function, to persons in compliance with a judicial order, and to persons in an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of students or other persons. All these exceptions are permitted under the Act.

Within the Montana State University Billings community, only those members, individually or collectively, acting in the student’s educational interest are allowed access to student education records. These members include personnel in the Offices of Admissions/Records, Controller, Financial Aid, and academic personnel within the limitations of their need to know [that would be US]. At its discretion the institution may provide directory information in accordance with the provisions of the Act to include the following: student name, local and permanent addresses, local and permanent telephone numbers, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, class, college, major, most recent school attended, full-time or part-time status, honor roll, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degree(s) and honors conferred, and commencement program information. Students may withhold directory information by notifying the Registrar in writing within two weeks after the first day of class for the Fall Term.
Penalties for Violating FERPA Regulations

The Family Policy Compliance Office reviews and investigates complaints of violations of FERPA. If the Office finds that there has been a failure to comply with FERPA, it will notify the institution about the corrections that need to be made to bring the institution into compliance. The Office will establish a reasonable period of time for the institution to voluntarily accomplish the specified changes.

If the Secretary of Education finds, after this reasonable period of time, that an institution has failed to comply with FERPA and determines that compliance cannot be secured by any means, the Secretary can, among other options, direct that no federal funds under his/her administrative control (financial aid, educational grants, etc.) be made available to that Institution.

Although federal funding has never been withheld from any institution under these regulations, civil cases have been brought for alleged violations of FERPA.

Mandatory Reporting

While confidentiality is very important, that does not mean that staff members will always keep information to themselves. In fact, there are times when the staff is required to share information, specifically threats of harm to oneself or others or evidence of child or elder abuse. If you learn anything that is concerning or needs to be reported, please tell a professional SSS staff member immediately. Any staff discussions about the student must occur in a totally private setting.
Problem Solving And Self-Directed Learning

Part of helping students to become self-directed learners is helping them understand the importance of setting learning goals. Following is an outline for setting up a learning goal.

You’re not going to reach your goal unless you have identified it first.

1. Identify the problem or the learning goal.
   - What is being asked for? What are you trying to solve? What do you hope to be able to do? What are you trying to memorize or understand?
   - What do you know already? What don’t you know?

2. Devise a plan.
   - Decide which steps to take and what you think is the logical order.

3. Carry out the plan.
   - Use the strategies you planned in step two. You will probably be making changes as you get into the work.

4. Evaluate
   - Did you learn what you need to know to perform well on the test or to prepare for the next class topic? Do you need to revisit any of the previous steps? *(Maybe you guessed wrong on the learning goal. Maybe your plan wasn’t practical. Or, maybe you hit the jackpot and everything you did was exactly what you needed.)*
   - *(Ongoing evaluation by both the tutor and the student of what you did in the tutoring sessions is necessary if you’re going to get the most out of your study group experience.)*
Principles Of Learning

(This material is all from the GateWay Community College Phoenix Website, but they credit the material that follows to Dr. Jill Stamm, professor at Arizona State University.)

We learn about...

• 10% of what we read
• 20% of what we hear
• 30% of what we see
• 50% of what we see and hear
• 70% of what we discuss with others
• 80% of what we experience personally
• 95% of what we teach others

It has been found that we learn best when:

• The material we are learning is fun
• We have to teach the material
• We have to apply (or use) the material
• We have a high interest in the material.

It has been found that it is hard to learn when:

• We have no prior knowledge of the material
• We have no personal feelings invested in learning the material
• The material consists of isolated facts
• We do not see any connections, and the professor did not indicate anything about the “big picture”
• There is no reason given for learning the material
• The student does not see the material as relevant to his or her goal.

Other basic learning principles:

• We learn what we are exposed to most often by seeing, hearing, saying, and studying.
• Repetition is especially important when the material is new.
• Mnemonic devices are useful when we are trying to remember something we don’t understand by hooking it with something we do understand. Examples of mnemonic devices are Acronyms (HOMES for the Great lakes, loci (seeing a list of things by visualizing them on something that does make sense, like the furniture in your room) and acrostics “My Very Excellent Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas” for the planets.
• Associations are unique to each student, so if you know your students’ interests you might help them get some ideas of how to tie the unknown to something they are very comfortable with.
• The best predictor of new learning is what you already know (this can be scary since some of our students have no background knowledge).
• The greatest predictor of gaining skills in the class is time on task. You will teach this by example.
• Focus more on the PROCESS than the PRODUCT, and on remembering MEANING before DETAIL. Try to get the big picture so the details will make more sense.
Section 504 & the ADA

We need to be aware of our legal responsibilities toward students, faculty, and staff that have disabilities. These explanations of Section 504 and the ADA are copied from: Banks, B. & Banks, C. (2001). Multicultural Education, 4th Edition, New York: Wylie, pp. 312-313.

Section 504 Of The Rehabilitation Act Of 1973

This regulation states, in part, that “no otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” This law, worded almost identically to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which prohibited discrimination based on race, color, or national origin), promises to expand opportunities to children and adults with disabilities in education, employment, and various other settings. It calls for provision of “auxiliary aides for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills”—for example, readers for students who are blind, interpreters for students who are deaf, and people to assist students with physical disabilities in moving from place to place. This requirement does not mean that schools, colleges, and employers must have all such aids available at all times; it simply demands that no person with disabilities may be excluded from a program because of the lack of an appropriate aid.

Architectural accessibility for students, teachers, and other people with physical and sensory impairments is an important feature of Section 504; however, the law does not call for a completely barrier-free environment. Emphasis is on accessibility to programs, not on physical modification of all existing structures. [For example, if a classroom is inaccessible, move that class.]

Americans With Disabilities Act Of 1990

(PL 101-336)...Patterned after Section 504 [above] the ADA extends civil rights protection to persons with disabilities in private sector employment, all public services, and in public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. A person with a disability is defined in the ADA as a person (1) with a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits that person in a major life activity (e.g., walking, talking, working, self-care); (2) with a record of such an impairment (such as a person who no longer has heart disease but is discriminated against because of that history); or (3) who is regarded as having such an impairment (a person with significant facial disfigurement due to a burn who is not limited in any major life activity but is discriminated against). The major provisions of the ADA include the following provisions: [These are edited for brevity. You might want to look at a copy of the ADA itself in the SSS TRIO Office.]

Employment: [Employers with 15 or more employees may not refuse to hire or promote the qualified employee who can perform the essential functions of the job with accommodations].
Public transportation: [All new vehicles for public transit must be accessible].
Telecommunications: [TDD phones available 24 hours a day].
Public Accommodations: It is illegal for public accommodations to exclude or refuse persons with disabilities...All new buildings must be made accessible, and existing facilities must remove barriers if the removal can be accomplished without much difficulty or expense.
Aside from teaching and providing student-focused services each of us, as office aids, peer mentors or professional staff, has a role in helping students (you) to gain independence, grow as individuals, and develop personal responsibility.

Though we often have the best intentions for helping students, we can easily overstep the line and, instead of empowering them, end up negatively enabling them. Negative enabling occurs when we (the staff) assume responsibility for the student or their situation and allow dependence. Additionally, we prevent them from experiencing the natural consequences of their behavior and/or choices.

When we take that responsibility away from students, we don’t allow them to face challenges and grow from their mistakes as well as from their successes. Empowering, on the other hand, allows us to respond with care and compassion to students as they solve their own problems.

To further illustrate the difference between enabling and empowering, consider the following comparisons:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabling</th>
<th>Empowering</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeing the student as incapable of solving his/her own problems</td>
<td>Seeing the student as having the resources to solve his or her own problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking over for the student</td>
<td>Encouraging the development of the student’s abilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making decisions for a student</td>
<td>Giving the student information so he or she can make his or her own informed decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing for a student what he/she can do for himself or herself</td>
<td>Allowing the student to do for himself or herself even if imperfectly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling powerless to be able to help students enough or feeling false power by taking on more than what is appropriate for your role</td>
<td>Feeling empowered yourself the more you see students growing, maturing, and even empowering others to be more responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing that to be caring you must always be available</td>
<td>Believing that you can be caring AND set limits that don’t deplete you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing you can’t refuse to give someone help if they request it</td>
<td>You are helping students by assisting them in figuring out options and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing students will get angry or feel abandoned if you don’t rescue/assist them</td>
<td>It’s normal for students to feel frustrated if you set limits, especially if you change from a rescuer to a limit-setter. Just know that you are really helping them by refusing to do for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing that it is fair to make accommodations or adjustments for some students</td>
<td>Knowing that, of course, if a student is an immediate crisis or has learning differences and exception is warranted, though the student is still responsible for himself or herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescuing-trying to be a hero</td>
<td>Mentoring-trying to be an example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sure, I can meet with you now, though I’ll have to skip my lunch break”</td>
<td>“I’d like to help you with this but I’m not available at this time. Let’s schedule a time for you to come back when I can give you my full attention”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sure, I’ll help you with this. I can probably figure it out, though it’s not my area of expertise”</td>
<td>“This isn’t my area of expertise. I need to refer you to _______” (i.e., advising, faculty, financial aid, professional staff, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I know…I know…This has been so hard for you. Tell me more”</td>
<td>“Our talking about this doesn’t seem to be helping you move ahead on this issue. I’d like to refer you to someone who can help with this issue.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information adapted from a memo written by Sandy Dellutri, Director of Counseling, Barat College.
Goals of the SSS TRIO Mentoring Program

1. Develop a respectful, trusting rapport with mentees;
2. Assist professional staff in providing 1:1 support and guidance;
3. Help increase mentees’ motivation, self-discipline and confidence levels;
4. Increase mentees’ awareness of the MSUB and how to navigate the university system;
5. Assist students in persistence and completion of their undergraduate degree and facilitate the pursuit of graduate programs or professional careers.

Role of the Peer Mentor

Peer mentors will play a role that will help students navigate their college life at MSUB. In the process, they will directly assist with student success, retention and graduation.

Primary duties of a peer mentor:
- Establish a positive rapport with mentee(s);
- Establish mutual trust and respect;
- Maintain regular contact and consistent support;
- Be available during scheduled hours;
- Provide the necessary information and resources to support academic and personal goals;
- Appropriately document all meaningful contact with mentee(s);
- Show support and encouragement, but do not promote dependency;
- Know personal limitations, strengths, and biases and use the knowledge to prevent problems;
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with mentee(s);
- Being a listening ear;
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Do not discuss mentees with individuals outside of the SSS TRIO office or staff unnecessarily. Do not discuss mentees with other students. If you have any concerns about a student, there is an open door policy for mentors to visit with the Academic Counselor at any time. If for any reason the Academic Counselor is not available, you may speak with the Director or Academic Coordinator.

Peer Mentors provide SSS participants with support and guidance on a wide variety of academic, personal, and social issues including:
- Class selection and class schedules;
- Campus and community services and resources;
- Assistance with financial aid, FAFSA, scholarships, and personal finances;
- Balancing work, academics, and home;
- Academic success strategies including, note taking, study strategies, test taking, & time management;
- Career choices and graduate schools;
- Getting involved on campus or in the community;
- Conflict resolution/de-escalation techniques.
Sometimes it is necessary to help mentees identify solutions to conflicts as well as helping them calm down before addressing an issue.

**Counselor vs. Mentor**

**What’s the difference between a therapist and a mentor?**

A significant difference between counseling and mentoring is in the here and now.

Counselors/therapists try and make sense of the past, emotions, feelings, and behavior and how those experiences impact who we are in the present.

A mentor focuses on a “narrow” aspect of the mentee’s life such as school, study goals, career goals, attending class, and helping the mentee find public assistance to help with rent or food. Mentors listen and provide supportive assistance, but **NEVER** embark on the therapeutic journey of the past.

1. As a mentor you are likely going to listen to your mentee’s life issues and challenges. However, you have to pay attention to the “fine line”. Resist giving personal advice and counseling the mentee especially when the mentee is experiencing significant psychological challenges: marital or family difficulties, addiction, depression or other significant life issues.

2. Some students seem to have highly dramatic lives. You may notice that if—by some fluke—their lives are going smoothly that something is done to create chaos. Don’t get caught in the rescuer mode. The mentors role is to help mentees develop coping and problem solving skills and self-advocate. Mentors should support mentees, but not do something that they are not capable of addressing.

**Professional boundaries**

Boundaries are critical and help set the guidelines for the mentor/mentee relationship. Try to avoid sharing information or participating in activities that could potentially cause messy situations.

Our goal is to help our students graduate and get ready for professional careers. Sometimes, by demonstrating that the world as a whole does not revolve around student drama we are helping the student move in the right direction. Paying attention to common-sense limits actually shows more respect for your students.

The SSS TRIO Mentor **must not create or foster a relationship where the student becomes dependent or where the SSS TRIO Mentor is codependent on the mentee and feels responsible for the success of the student.**

These types of relationships are not in the best interest of the student or you. If you’re concerned about any of this, speak to the Academic Counselor or Director.
**Communication Techniques**

Effective communication between mentor and mentee requires the ability to ask questions. Generally speaking, open questions are more productive.

Questions are a valuable tool for a mentor, but mentors should not be interrogating you. Mentors should not be the only ones asking questions. You should try to ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions provide an opportunity for the mentor to share experiences, thoughts, and feelings and encourages the development of meaningful communication.

Closed-ended: require nothing more than a yes or no response and will quickly end the conversation before it has a chance to start.

**Paraphrasing**

To paraphrase restate in your own words and/or summarize what was said to ensure that you understand, heard and care.

- Heard what the mentee has said
- Understood what the mentee means
- Cares what the mentee thinks/feels

Sample paraphrases

- I understand what you’ve said to mean…
- In other words…
- As I listen to you, I hear you saying…

**Silence**

Most of us are really uncomfortable with silence, but there are times during a mentoring session that silence is the only appropriate thing. Sometimes the mentor asks a question and it just hovers out there for what seems like minutes. As you get to know each other, you will realize that some people process information very slowly and that it takes time for the other person to formulate an answer.

Use a variety of approaches to try and build on the conversation and problem solving efforts. Using the samples below could help the mentee consider the situation logically to help formulate a plan to address an issue/concern. It also encourages students to learn to reflect internally on the problem and identify possible solutions that they could potentially implement.

- Consider XZY…
- What would happen if?
- What do you think?
- How do you think we should approach this?
- Think about what might make….
Body Language –

80% of communication is non-verbal. Meaning, as a mentor you have to be aware of and understand your mentee(s) non-verbal/body language.

When your students arrive at your meeting place, observe them. Sometimes they look exhausted, angry, or defeated. Sometimes they look energetic and happy. If a student’s nonverbal messages are telling you that this is a truly “awful, horrible day,” (for whatever reason), maybe this is the time to just listen to your mentee vent instead of following the meeting rubric.

As the mentor, you send nonverbal signals too. The student should get the message that you are delighted to see him/her, you’re happy to see them. If the student is devastated by a bad grade, you feel great empathy for him/her. Try to send the message that you are in tune with your mentee’s feelings, good or bad.
SMART Goal Setting

Adapted from Top Achievement: Creating SMART GOALS & Goal Setting – Powerful Written Goals in 7 Easy Steps! by Gene Donohue

“The car is packed and you’re ready to go, your first ever cross-country trip. From the White Mountains of New Hampshire to the rolling hills of San Francisco, you’re going to see it all. You put the car in gear and off you go. First stop, the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. A little while into the trip you need to check the map because you’ve reached an intersection you’re not familiar with. You panic for a moment because you realize you’ve forgotten your map. But you say the heck with it because you know where you’re going. You take a right, change the radio station and keep on going. Unfortunately, you never reach your destination. Too many of us treat goal setting the same way. We dream about where we want to go, but we do not have a map to get there.”

What are the similarities between a map and a goal? They are also basically the step by step “instructions” to reach your destination/goals.

In order for something to be a goal, it:

- Must be important to you, personally.
- Must be within your power to make it happen through your own actions.
- Must be something you have a reasonable chance of achieving.
- Must be clearly defined and have a specific plan of action.
- Must be achievable within a specified amount of time.

Goals are important, but do not overwhelm yourself. Keep goals to a maximum of 5-7 at a time. Create SMART goals. In order to be a SMART goal five (5) criteria must be met:

1. Specific
2. **Measureable**
3. Actionable or **Attainable**
4. **Realistic**
5. **Timely**
How to Set SMART Goals

1. **Specific** - your goal MUST identify exactly what you want to accomplish. Be as specific as possible.

   *Bad:* Graduate from MSUB
   *Good:* Graduate from MSUB with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a minor in Information Systems.

2. **Measureable** - You can’t manage what you can’t measure. Quantify the results of your goal as much as possible. Measuring helps ensure that you have in fact if you have met your goal or not.

   *Bad:* Do better this semester than last semester.
   *Good:* Earn a 3.0 in the fall 2015 semester instead of the 2.8 earned in the spring of 2016.

3. **Actionable** - Start each goal statement off with an action verb such as run, earn, finish, reduce instead of a “be” verb.

   *Bad:* Be more proactive to get financial assistance with energy
   *Good:* Schedule an appointment with HRDC LEIAP to complete the energy assistance application.

4. **Realistic** - Goals should challenge you, but MUST be within the realm of possibilities that you have the ability to complete as a result of your own individual actions.

   *Bad:* To be hired as a manager of a large department right after graduation.
   *Good:* Gain full-time employment with EMBS providing advancement opportunities earning $32,000 in Billings, MT.

   Not every goal is realistic. For instance, you may want to take 19-21 credits, work part-time, take care of your family, and get a 4.0. While a 4.0 is possible, it will be extremely difficult under those circumstances. It is important to consider your **WHOLE** life when considering goals.

5. **Time-Bound** - Each goal needs to have a deadline. When will you be finished with the goal? It could be a short-term goal such as 1-week, or longer such as 1-month, 6-months, 1-year and so on. A goal without an end date is a dream and significantly less likely to be accomplished.

   *Bad:* Lose 20 pounds
   *Good:* Lose 20 pounds by January 1, 2016.
sometimes, we will have extremely important, but big goals. in those instances, break the goal down into manageable parts.

make sure to write your goals down. writing down your goals actually helps you put their completion into motion. it also shows your commitment.

do not forget to monitor/review your goals. writing them down isn’t enough. you need to make sure you are taking the steps necessary to complete the goals by their end dates. incorporate your goals into your daily life.

share your goals with people committed to helping you achieve them.

**montana career information system (mcis)**

one of the goals behind going to college is to graduate and get a job that meets your financial and career goals. doing so starts with choosing a major, but not just any major—the right major. mcis can help you find what major/career fits you the best. mcis won’t tell you what major to choose, but will help you identify options through assessments. you never know what you might learn about yourself!

log into mcis at [https://mtcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html](https://mtcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html).

username: msubsos
password: opportunity

getting started:

1. create a portfolio
   a. creating a portfolio allows students to take assessments, save the results and review them later.

2. start taking assessments
   a. **career cluster inventory** - matches interests with activities and compares to different career groups (entrepreneurial, investigative, artistic, conventional, etc)
   b. **interest profiler** - rate activity statements to determine what you might like to do (not based on skill, only interest)
   c. **skills** - compares skills you have to ones that you may need to develop for certain occupations
   d. **work importance locator** - identifies work related needs (working conditions, creativity, recognition, etc.)
   e. **reality check** - how much money will you actually need to support the lifestyle you want (buying a house, renting, buying cars, children, etc.)

in order to get a good idea of your interests, skills, and needs take more than one (at least 4) assessments. if you take one or two, the results are going to be skewed; i.e. not really reliable.

3. education - choosing a plan of study
   mcis also has great resources to help students figure out what to study, where to study, and even how to pay for college.
4. Financial Aid & Scholarships
   a. Financial Aid Sort - creates a list of scholarships and grants based on answers to questions
   b. Financial Aid - helps students find information on grants and scholarships.
   c. Montana Scholarships - provides detailed information about scholarships and grants specifically for MT residents.

**Note Taking - Adapted from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo**

There are several different types of note-taking methods. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. Below is a summary of the major types of note-taking methods.

- **Cornell**
  - Cornell method provides a systematic format for condensing and organizing. It has an easy format to pull out major concepts and theories. It also doubles as a study tool. Disadvantages - none
  - The Cornell Method is recommended because it is a great way to organizing and reviewing lecture notes which some have suggested that it can improve comprehension.

- **Outline**
  - General information starts at the left with more detailed information identified by a dash or indentation. The outline method provides well organized notes and relationships. It reduces the need for editing. Disadvantages - Requires more thought during class to effectively organize the information to take notes and is not easy to do with fast paced lectures.

- **Mapping**
  - Mapping is a graphic representation of the content of a lecture. This format helps visual learners track lecture content. Relationships are easily seen. Notes can be edited by adding pages to add additional content. Disadvantages - Mapping can make changes in content from major topics more difficult to identify.

- **Charting**
  - The charting method is a useful with organized lectures. Note pages would be set up in columns and information presented during the lecture would be recorded in the appropriate column. Disadvantage - lecture content must be understood for this method to be effective.

- **Sentence**
  - Every new topic would be recorded on a separate line and numbered. The sentence method helps with organized note taking and allows students to get most of the information presented - if he/she is able to take notes quickly. Disadvantages - It is nearly impossible to determine major/minor points of the lecture in this format.
A NOTE TAKING SYSTEM that is frequently recommended for university students is the Cornell method, which was developed by Dr. Walter Pauk of Cornell University. The Cornell method is an excellent study system for organizing and reviewing your lecture notes to increase your comprehension and critical thinking of course material, which typically results in improved test scores.

**Step 1: RECORD LECTURE NOTES**

Prepare your paper by drawing a vertical line about 2 ½ inches from the left edge of your paper. This **left column** will become your review or self-test column, which you leave blank until Step 2. The **right, larger column** is where you will write your lecture notes. You can use an outline or paragraph format. Ensure that you include any information that the professor displays on the white board, such as diagrams and problems/solutions. Add verbal examples, questions/answers, and other relevant, special comments that the professor expresses during lecture.

![Cornell Method Diagram]

**Step 2: REVIEW YOUR NOTES and CREATE YOUR SELF-TEST COLUMN**

Within a day of the class lecture, review your notes. Reviewing lecture material within 24-48 hours of the lecture and several times a week thereafter can increase your long-term recall of information from approximately 20% to over 70%. Reviewing consistently also eliminates the stressful practice of cramming before a test, re-learning information you have forgotten during the intervening weeks.

In the review/self-test column, write key words or brief phrases to summarize main points of the lecture. Develop and write potential test questions that you think your professor could ask on a test. Creating practice test questions, which is called self-testing, is a very powerful and successful study strategy that significantly increases your understanding of the material as well as your long-term retention of the information.

**Step 3: SUMMARIZE YOUR NOTES**

Prepare a summary of the lecture in your own words. Summarizing information is another way of reviewing and critically thinking about what you have learned. Creating a summary helps you to identify what you know and understand, as well as making very obvious the information for which you need additional clarification from professor or study partners. Summaries can include diagrams and illustrations, equations, problems/solutions, as well as words.
### Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review/self-test column</th>
<th>Record your lecture notes in this column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Def. of hepatitis?</td>
<td>Hepatitis (lecture topic) January 24 (lecture date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 5 infectious types: what are they?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which types become chronic?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How are symptoms of A and B the same? Different?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What diseases are caused by chronic hepatitis?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If a health worker had symptoms of nausea, fever, abdominal pain, he/she would have type D. T/F?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Which type can a mother pass on to a fetus?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Which vaccine for A? B? C-E?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Summary

There are five infectious forms of hepatitis, which is an inflammation of the liver: A, B, C, D, E. Chronic types are A, B, E. There are vaccines for A & B. Depending on the type, hepatitis is transmitted by food, contaminated water (feces), blood, shared needles, and/or body fluids. Type B can be transmitted to a fetus. Hep C can lead to cirrhosis or liver cancer. This is the type that health care workers are at higher risk for. Hep E is rare in U.S.

### Step 4: TEST YOURSELF

After you have completed your self-test column and summary, quiz yourself. Cover up the right-hand column where you recorded your notes and use the key words and self-test questions to review the information. Identify the concepts and facts that you had difficulty recalling accurately, and study more carefully the information you didn’t know or understand completely.

### Stage 5: REHEARSAL THE INFORMATION FREQUENTLY

Review your notes and test yourself several times a week until you have a complete and accurate understanding of all of the lecture material. Use your textbook to supplement and clarify your lecture notes to develop a deeper understanding of terms, definitions, and concepts. Reviewing over several days (“distributed review”), versus cramming before a test, ensures deeper learning and increases your chances of remembering what you have learned.

Source:  
**Time Management Strategies**

**Time Management**

Being successful at the college level requires a careful and effective utilization of time. Students are typically scheduled for 15 or more hours of classroom work per week. Additionally, they are expected to average two to three hours of preparation for each hour in the classroom. This means that at least a 45-hour workweek is involved in being a full-time student. On top of that, many students have part-time jobs, family, and social responsibilities.

The job of being a university student can be carried out efficiently or inefficiently. The way we use our time (or waste it) is largely a matter of patterns. One of the best techniques for developing more efficient habits for the use of time is to prepare a time schedule. Studies have shown that people who have a well-designed schedule achieve a greater amount of success than those who don’t.

The most successful system for most students is to combine long and short-range planning. Doing so, a student can make a general schedule for an entire semester and then create a more specific plan for several days at a time. – VirginiaTech

Adapted from AboutNow.com at http://collegelife.about.com/od/academiclife/a/timemanagement.htm

1. **Get -- and use -- a calendar** - It can be a paper calendar. It can be your cell phone. It can be a PDA. No matter what kind it is, though, make sure you have one. The SSS office has some available if your budget for the semester is tight.

2. **Write down everything** - Write down everything in one place. Things to include when developing a schedule:
   - Classes
   - Homework (studying, reading, group projects)
   - Work
   - Family/Friends
   - Sleep
   - “Me” time
   - Laundry
   - Housework
   - Exercise

3. **Schedule time to relax** - Do not forget to schedule in time to relax and breathe. Just because your calendar goes from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. doesn't mean you can. “Me” time is an important component of being successful and keeping up with deadlines. If you are too tired or stressed, you will not retain important information from classes.
4. **Keep trying new systems** - If your cell phone calendar isn't big enough, buy a paper one. If your paper one keeps getting torn, try a PDA. If you have too many things written down each day, try color-coding to help simplify. Very few college students make it through their programs without some kind of calendaring system; keep trying until you find one that works for you.

5. **Allow for flexibility** - Things inevitably come up that you weren't expecting. You may not have known that your roommate's birthday is this week, and you certainly do not want to miss the celebrations! Leave room in your calendar so that you can move things around a little when needed.

6. **Plan ahead** - Do you have a large research paper due the last week of the semester? Work backward in your calendar and figure out how much time you need to write it, how much time you'll need to research it, and how much time you'll need to pick your topic. If you think you'll need six weeks for the entire project, work backward from the due date and schedule the time into your calendar before it's too late.

7. **Plan for the unexpected** - Sure, you just might be able to pull off two papers and a presentation during midterm’s week. But what happens if you catch the flu the night you're supposed to be pulling the all-nighter? Expect the unexpected so you do not have to spend more unplanned time trying to fix your mistakes.

8. **Schedule rewards in** - Your midterms week is a nightmare, but it will all be over Friday by 2:30. Schedule a fun afternoon and a nice dinner out with some friends; your brain will need it, and you can relax knowing that you're not supposed to be doing anything else.

**Resources**

http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/time.html
Résumé Tips from Career Services

1. Résumé’s objective statement should focus on the specific job, internship or industry. Objective statements are not required, but act as a thesis statement guiding the content of the résumé and assists the student in identifying relevant education, skills, and experiences that support their goal/objective statement.

2. Students entering a new field or just starting in college should include relevant coursework. Relevant coursework provides the foundation of the résumé and shows that while the student may not have the experience they have an educational foundation for the position or industry.

3. Keep résumés to one page as much as possible. Résumé’s should be direct and to the point. Delete non-relevant that is significantly dated to try and meet the 1-page recommendation.
   a. Know the agency. Applicants to research the agency to find out what type of résumé and information is preferred/required. For example, federal agencies want applicants to list everything. Résumé’s should be longer than one page.

4. Consider résumé and cover letters to be marketing tools. Avoid grammatical and spelling errors.

5. Visit Career Services in LI 100 and McMullen hall for specific résumé and cover letter examples.
Financial Literacy Resources

Budget and checkbook templates are available. Just ask your mentor or one of the professional staff about the Budget template that we have!

Obtain FREE annual credit reports from https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action

 Students will need to be able to answer basic questions about purchases and addresses to obtain the information online. Otherwise requests can be made in writing.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid is awarded to more than 60% of Montana State University Billings' (MSUB) students in the form of grants, scholarships, tuition waivers, work-study and loans.

Free federal financial aid application is located at https://fafsa.ed.gov/. Students will need a copy of their taxes (or can import into the application), social security number, and parental information if the student is considered dependent.

To be eligible for financial aid, students must meet satisfactory academic progress. This means that they must pass 67% of their courses and maintain a minimum of a 2.0 GPA. Students who do not meet SAP can petition financial aid for funding, but it is not a guarantee. SSS TRIO provide petition assistance to students that have been denied financial aid. Financial Aid appeal forms can be obtained from the Academic Counselor.

Scholarship Information

The MSUB University Scholarship deadline is February 1. All scholarship applications are required to be submitted electronically. This means:

- The applications need to be submitted early AND the professor (or whoever is writing the letters of recommendation) needs to be asked and notified BEFORE you submit the application. In the application you MUST include their name and email address. Let them know that the letter of recommendation must be submitted electronically. (They will receive an email for the request.)
- The writers of the Letters of Recommendation need to have enough time to write GREAT letters. SO ASK NOW!

How to write a successful scholarship essay?

Students need to write a personal statement that introduces and explains who they are. This statement can be no more than 500 words. A successful essay can be straightforward without “bells and whistles.”

Follow this format:

Paragraph 1. Who are you?
Paragraph 2. Why are you going to college?
Paragraph 3. What will you do with your college degree?
Paragraph 4. What do you do outside of college?
Paragraph 5. How would a scholarship benefit you?

Scholarship essays need to be proofread for grammar and punctuation. No mistakes!

**FASFA – Free Application for Student Financial Aid**

FASFA is a form that can be completed annually by current and prospective college students in the United States that determines their eligibility to receive student financial assistance. Students are nearly always eligible to receive some form of financial assistance. Those students that do not qualify for need based assistance, may be eligible for an unsubsidized Stafford Loan regardless of their income or circumstances.

Students must meet certain criteria to be considered eligible for aid:

- Registered with the Selective Service System
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
- Is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or an eligible non-citizen
- Have a valid Social Security number
- Have a high school diploma or GED
- Sign the certification statement stating that
  - Not in default on a federal student loan and do not owe money on a federal student grant
  - Federal student aid will only be used for educational purposes
- Has not been found guilty of the sale or possession of illegal drugs while federal aid was being received

There are several different types of financial aid:

- Pell Grant – a grant for students with low expected family contribution
- Stafford Loan
- Federal Perkins Loan - loan that is like the Stafford, but is lent directly by schools that are Title IV- eligible
- Federal Work-Study Program – program allows students to work part-time, up to a certain amount.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) can be found at this website: [https://fafsa.ed.gov/](https://fafsa.ed.gov/)

Students and parents that are looking to us the FASFA must create an FSA ID. This ID is used to confirm your identity with accessing your financial aid information and electronically signing federal student aid documents.
MSU Billings Code of Student Conduct

The university has a full student handbook for the students of MSU Billings. To view and read this handbook please visit http://www.msubillings.edu/vcsa/studenthandbook.htm or go to the SSS Webpage for the link to this page.