

# ISSUE 10

## JANUARY 2009

COMPUTER  
& NON-TRADITIONAL

THE HUSKIE  
CONNECTION

### ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER

As an NIU student, there are many factors that affect your life. You have to answer questions such as: Where will I live? How can I manage my time so I can exercise, socialize, work, etc.? How much money can I afford to spend on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis? How much do I want to become involved on campus? Which group will I choose to join? Where can I find tutoring? All that and you haven't even begun to think about which classes you are going to take next semester. An academic advisor can assist you or refer you to an appropriate person to answer these important questions.

Every student at NIU has an academic advisor which they can meet with every semester. While academic advisors may assist in answering a multitude of questions, like those listed above, their primary responsibilities are to **help you:**

- Explore your academic interests and determine an appropriate major. For those students who have selected a major, an advisor can assist you with confirming that you have made the best selection.
- Design a program of study, meeting your individual interests and needs. Advisors can assist you with not only choosing a major but also an appropriate minor or certificate.
- Map out your schedule and prepare for registration. If you are asking yourself which classes are best for me to take next semester, an advisor can help.
- Monitor your academic progress. Advisors help students stay on track towards graduation. For example, if your plan is to graduate within 4 years then your advisor can help ensure that you reach that goal.
- Clarify your educational and life goals. Advisors may assist you with understanding various career options associated with a certain major and graduate school possibilities.

- Find activities and opportunities to enhance your academic experience. All students should enjoy themselves in and outside of the classroom. Advisors can help you find a student organization or other involvement opportunities that will help you get the most out of your NIU experience.

If you haven't met with an advisor since your orientation day or simply don't know how to contact your advisor then you can use the contact information for advising offices throughout NIU. You should contact the college in which your major lays. The Academic Advising Center (Adams Hall 404, 815-753-2573) advises all students who are undecided—any college and is available to those seeking alternative majors and students reassessing their current academic situation.

#### **College of Business**

Barsema Hall 201, (815) 753-1325

#### **College of Education**

Graham Hall 327, (815) 753-8355

#### **College of Engineering & Engineering Technology**

Engineering Building 331, (815) 753-1442

#### **College of Health and Human Sciences**

Wirtz Hall 227, (815) 753-1891

#### **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

Zulauf Hall 201, (815) 753-0114

#### **College of Visual and Performing Arts**

Music Building 141, (815) 753-1635

-Jonathon Ferguson

Academic Advisor, Academic Advising Center

## EXPANDING GOOD MORNING HUSKIES!

What is Good Morning Huskies, you ask? This program was made with a focus on increasing our commuter student's knowledge about Commuter & Non-Traditional Student Service provides at NIU. Good Morning Huskies takes place twice per month of the academic year. At each event for the program, you will find free food such as fruits, granola bars, and beverages, and information on Commuter and Non-Traditional services. Good Morning Huskies is held in various locations with high traffic of commuter students on campus. You also can receive information about services that our co-sponsors provide that can help to enhance commuter students' college experience.

This has been a GREAT semester since we are experiencing an incredible growth of commuter students participants at each Good Morning Huskies event compared to last year. The program's success this semester would not have happened without the support of all co-sponsors that partnered with us. Each event is sponsored by various departments and groups that provide services that is beneficial for commuter students. Campus Activities Board, Campus Child Care, Health Enhancement, Northern View Community, Recreation Services, and Women's Resource Center has co-sponsored Good Morning Huskies this semester and we thank them for their support!

We want to share the same experience with our evening commuting students. We are going to expand the program to our evening commuting students by introducing Good Evening Huskies! Good Evening Huskies will begin in the spring semester. Good Evening Huskies will provide evening commuter students with free food and information about services at NIU just like with Good Morning Huskies.



The schedule of our Good Evening Huskies events will be released and featured in the next issue of The Huskie Connection. You can also find the information about each event by visiting our website, [www.niu.edu/comnontrad](http://www.niu.edu/comnontrad), under Events. The fastest

way to find out about the events and other information is by joining our Facebook group, Commuter & Non-Traditional Student Services: What's the 411? There you will be notified each time there is new information and this is a great opportunity for you to communicate with us and ask questions.

We want to extend an invitation to all departments and student groups on campus at NIU to participate Good Evening Huskies with us by taking the opportunity to be a co-sponsor! There is a limit of one co-sponsor per event. Remember that Good Evening Huskies will take place twice per month so please reserve your spot soon as you can. If you are interested, please contact us by calling 815.753.9999 or by emailing to [CommNonTrad@niu.edu](mailto:CommNonTrad@niu.edu).

-Andy Schewe,  
Graduate Assistant

## CRUISING DOWN RELAXATION AVENUE PT.2



The new semester is a great chance for a new beginning and here are some tips so that you are physically and emotionally ready for the year. For the first few weeks, try to concentrate on getting all of your physical and emotional needs met. By that I mean try to not be sleep or nutrient deprived and that your bodies and minds are operating at full capacity. This way, when you push yourself, over-tax and over-extend yourself, you will have reserves to call upon.

Try to be sensitive to those little cues that tell you you're experiencing stress and tension. If you realize at an early stage, it will take less energy on your part to get relief.

As stated in the last issue, the key is to have techniques that work in nearly any situation (inside/outside; in class/out of class; with friends/by yourself; short/longer duration activities, etc.). While there is no magic number, shoot for between 8 and 12 activities. This will allow you to relax in almost any situation. Based on information from Dr. Andrew Weil, a noted health author and researcher ([www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com)), here are some tried and true techniques that have been used by folks to achieve a more relaxed state. These are not the only effective techniques, however. Talking with friends, music, a walk, a hot shower, TV, reflective writing, etc. can all work for you, if you enjoy it and don't over depend on it.

**1) Breathing** strongly influences mind, body and moods. By simply focusing your attention on your breathing, and without doing anything to change it, you move in the direction of relaxation. There are worse places to have your attention—on your thoughts, for one, since thoughts are the source of much of our anxiety, guilt and unhappiness. Get in the habit of shifting your awareness to your breath whenever you find yourself dwelling on upsetting thoughts.

**2) Exercise.** One of the benefits of regular aerobic exercise is its moderating effect on emotions. This is a long-term benefit, but aerobic and nonaerobic exercise can also work in acute situations as a symptomatic treatment. If you feel angry or upset, a brisk walk or run or a half hour of lifting weights will often put you back in a good mood.

**3) Massage and body work.** For a wonderful, relaxing experience, get a massage or other form of body work. In order to gain full benefit, you need to be totally passive and surrender to the touch of the person giving the massage. The Rec Center offers seated chair massage at only \$1 a minute (15 minute minimum) and full massage for rates between \$.83 and \$.72/minute (30 minute minimum). Appts. available thru May 4th.

**4) Progressive relaxation** is a way of releasing tension in muscles. There are many variations of progressive relaxation. A common technique is the following:

- Lie on your back in a comfortable position.
- Take a series of deep slow breaths and focus your awareness on different parts of the body in turn, becoming aware of any muscular tension and releasing it. One way to do this is to first tense a muscle deliberately and then relax it. Start with the front of the body, tensing and relaxing the muscles of the upper face, then moving on to the jaw, neck, and chest, front of the arms, abdomen, thighs, lower legs, feet and toes. Then, do the same down the back of the body.

You can easily incorporate progressive relaxation into your daily routine and find ways to make it more portable. For instance, you can modify it for a sitting position and do it during breaks at class.

**5) Meditation** is simply directed concentration. Mediators learn to focus their awareness and direct it onto an object: the breath, a phrase or word repeated silently, a memorized inspirational passage, or an image in the mind's eye. Researchers have documented immediate benefits in terms of lowered blood pressure, decreased heart and respiratory rate, increased blood flow, and other measurable signs of the relaxation response.

Stress cannot be totally avoided, but by applying your attention and a little practice, you can make effective relaxation the norm for you. Good luck in the new semester.

-Steve Lux  
Health Enhancement

## SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW:



Each month the Office of Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services highlights exceptional students who are commuter and/or non-traditional students that you may see around campus. These students are actively involved in the many outstanding student organizations that NIU has to offer. Here's a peek at Kevin McCauslin who is a commuter and a non-traditional student and "Someone You Should Know."

**Name:** Kevin McCauslin

**Age:** 27

### **What identifies you as part of the commuter/non-traditional student population?**

That I'm 27 yrs old, that I have a daughter and I am a military veteran.

### **Do you feel your military experience provided you with extra preparation for the college?**

Being a military vet, I have more discipline but that's something that comes with age too. I know what I want and I have a plan to achieve it. Through time as well as in the Marine Corps I feel that I have a better sense of direction than most college students.

### **What is your major; and what year are you in college?**

I currently have sophomore status and my major is electrical engineering. I also have two minors, economics with interest in the governmental side (macro economics) and my other minor is in Japanese language.

### **What is your favorite class this semester?**

It's a pretty tough choice. It's a toss up between physics 150, and Introduction to Japanese culture. Both the classes are rather entertaining, and very interesting.

### **What do you plan to do after graduation?**

That is a long time away, but I plan on working toward renewable energy sources, and trying to better society. Making us less reliant on oil, and reducing the world's carbon imprint on the planet, that's my ultimate goal.

### **Would you tell me a little about your daughter?**

Her name is Athena; she will be turning 3 on February 19th. She is a very outgoing and happy child; her favorite word is "NO." She currently lives in Iowa with her mother and I'm looking forward to spending my first Christmas-day with her this year.

### **What is your greatest challenge as a non-traditional student?**

Being older and my memory doesn't work as well like when I was younger. I wish I had known what I wanted sooner, because I could be out there doing it right now, but I'm appreciative that at least I know what I want now.

### **Is there any advice you would give to students in situations similar to yours?**

Stay modest, stay hopeful, take life for what it is and live life for what it's worth. If there is something you are ambitious about, go for it and don't let anything stop you.

### **While on campus where do you spend most of your time?**

I spend most of my time at the Holmes Student Center, in the C.N.T.S. lounge. I am appreciative to have met the people who spend time in this office. Plus the staff are open and hardworking and do everything they can to help you out and make you feel welcome.

-Desireé Arnold  
Student Coordinator



## ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Now that winter is upon us and the state of the economy is an issue, learning how to save while keeping warm is a top priority for anyone, including students. Thankfully, there are a few energy assistance programs and energy tips available for those who need some extra help. A program available is The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) which is designed to help low-income households pay for their energy costs. Both individuals and families are eligible for this program. It is provided by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services and the State of Illinois. For more details about this program, contact 1-800-252-8643.

There are also many helpful tips to conserve energy in your home so the electric bill will not be so high. Here are a few things you can do:

Turn your thermostat to 68° and if you are gone for an extended period of time turn it down to 55°. This has a potential to save you anywhere from 3% to 20% on electricity usage.

Be sure to replace the filters on your furnace and/or heaters. A filter that needs to be replaced forces the furnace/heater to use more energy than necessary. Use cold water during laundry. This helps especially if you use propane.

When the sun is out, open your blinds so some heat from sun beams can come into your home. Otherwise, keep blinds shut to keep cold air near the window from circulating.

Turn off any appliances and lights when they are not in use.

Check and/or increase your insulation. The Department of Energy has suggestions for how much insulation is necessary for the area you live in. Go to <http://www.energy.gov/forconsumers.htm> for more info.

Make sure your furnace/heater is working efficiently. Any type of malfunction in the winter is inconvenient and unnecessary!

-Justine Cramsey  
Student Coordinator

## PLANET EARTH SERIES

I would like to talk to you all about the Planet Earth event we held at the end of October. It was a great success and I would like to thank everyone who came and supported our office. The Committee for the Preservation of Wildlife and the VEG Club co-sponsored the event with our office and I owe thanks to them as well. The reason I put the event together was to offer students an opportunity to take a break from homework for a little food and educational entertainment. I believe the episode we showed, "Jungles", was educational and gave a different perspective on how a person might typically view nature. I also believe there was necessary emphasis on what is going on with the planet today and paid attention to areas that do not necessarily have enough attention. I definitely plan on having this event again with a different episode, so please stay tuned to the weekly newsletters for more information. Once again, thank you for your support and stay tuned for future showings!

-Justine Cramsey  
Student Coordinator

The Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services Office would like to thank you for your support of the Housing Fair that took place on November 5th 2008. We are always looking for ways to improve our programs and services. We have provided you with a short survey about this event and your input is greatly appreciated. This year we exceeded our expectations of student participate we had over 200 students our highest number to date. Please return this survey by Tuesday November 25, 2008



## GRADUATION PREPARATIONS

Here are some tips on how to prepare for our graduating seniors:

### Academic Advisement

Even if you have been following a four year plan it is a good idea to revisit your transcript and check for errors. Count and re-count your credits with an advisor especially in the distributive studies category; the last thing anyone wants is to miss graduation because of a clerical error.

### Graduation Registration

Students who are finished in the spring you should have already registered for graduation using MYNIU; the deadline for Spring 2009 was December first. If you missed this cutoff you will need to apply for Summer 2009 before May first. If you have any questions about this process you should contact registration and records at (815) 753-0681 or online at <http://www.reg.niu.edu/regrec/>.

### Commencement

Once you register for graduation the university will send information to your permanent address about ordering class rings, graduation invitations as well as the cap and gown for the commencement ceremony. If you decide to participate in the ceremony you need to register for that as well; information and answers to frequently asked questions are available at <http://www.convocenter.niu.edu/commencement/undergrad/index.html>.

### Post Graduation

If you are going to continue with schooling there are GRE (Graduate Record Examination) preparation courses offered on campus; dates, times, and registration fees can be viewed at <http://www.niu.edu/clasep/testprep/gre/index.shtml>. Whether you are going to be applying to grad school or for jobs remember to approach at least three of your professors/supervisors and ask them to write you a letter of recommendation or for permission to use them as a reference.

Most of all we wish everyone lots of luck, and congratulations to all of you who will be leaving NIU as a college graduate.

-Desireé Arnold  
Student Coordinator

## IDEAS?

Have programming ideas that you would like us to consider? Have concerns that you would like heard? Please email us at [comnontrad@niu.edu](mailto:comnontrad@niu.edu) for any type of feedback.

## CONTACT THE STAFF

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## OFFICE INFORMATION

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