

Apr. 2010

## HUSKIE CONNECTION

OFF-CAMPUS & NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

### Need Help Finding That Perfect Job?

For many students, considering options after college is a daunting task. For those looking to enter their career field, the job searching process can be time-consuming and stressful. To aid you in this process, utilize some of these tips as you search for that perfect job:

#### 1) Know Your Resources

- a. Career Services is a great resource to utilize in order to polish your resume, practice interviewing skills, and job search. Their web site also has tips to help students in their job searching process. Visit <http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices> or stop in their office located in the Campus Life Building, Room 235 in order to become familiar with these options.
- b. Networking is a beneficial way to discover job openings and career opportunities. Contact personal and professional acquaintances to gather information about job referrals and openings.
- c. Employment agencies, search firms, public employment services, professional associations, and professional journals are just a few more resources to consider when looking for jobs.



#### 2) Put Time and Effort Into Your Search

- a. Make sure you have several professionals look over your resume and cover letter. Keep updating your resume, or start a resume folder where you keep your professional accomplishments in order to make it easier to update your resume in the future.
- b. Set aside quality time to apply for jobs. Regularly schedule time to work on your job search in a distraction-free environment. You want potential employers to see that you put time and effort into your resume and all other correspondence.

#### 3) Don't Get Discouraged

- a. The job market is tough. Don't get discouraged if interviews do not lead to a job or when your friends and colleagues land positions before you. Stay confident and keep putting in the time.
- b. Try to remind yourself that the time and effort you are putting forth will eventually pay off.
- c. Keep practicing your interviewing skills. When a job opportunity arises, you will be more than prepared to ace the interview.

Good luck to all job hunters!

Lauren Mock  
Graduate Intern

## Get the 411 on NIU Cares Day

NIU Cares Day is one of the biggest events NIU sponsors each year. During this day, hundreds of NIU students, faculty, and staff participate in city-wide community service activities. This year will mark the fourth consecutive NIU Cares Day. The number of students participating has greatly increased with each year, and current expectations exceed 1,500 students. "It [NIU Cares Day] is becoming very well known among students," says Becky Harlow, Assistant Director in Student Involvement & Leadership Development. "We wanted it to be a spring tradition where students can get involved."

This year, NIU Cares Day will take place on Saturday, April 17. That morning, students and other volunteers will gather in the Duke Ellington Ballroom in the Holmes Student Center at 10:00 a.m. in order to check-in, pick up a t-shirt, and find out where they have been assigned to do their community service. At around 11:00 a.m., several speakers will kick-off the event. "The kickoff event helps students understand the magnitude of NIU Cares Day; they get to see all the students who are involved and it gives them a little boost for their work that day."

After the kick-off, students pick up their lunch and go to their assigned bus to be transported to the location of their community service. Most organizations that participate in NIU Cares Day are community agencies and non-profit organizations, including local DeKalb schools, local libraries, the DeKalb Park District, low-income child care centers, New Alliance, TAILS, Salvation Army, YMCA, and Kishwaukee Hospital. These are only a few of the organizations that receive support from NIU students and volunteers.

When students, faculty, and staff arrive at their destination, they will meet with staff members who inform them about the organization they are helping and instruct the students on what needs to be done. "The service projects usually take a few hours," says Harlow. "We keep the buses going in continuous routes so as soon as the students are done, they can be brought back to campus."

NIU Cares Day is a rewarding experience for all who are involved. The opportunity to give back to the DeKalb community is something we should all take advantage of, and NIU Cares Day is a great opportunity to do just that. Contact Becky Harlow at (815) 753-6703 if you are interested in more information about NIU Cares Day or if you are interested in signing up for the event.

Justine Cramsey  
Student Coordinator



## Facebook: The Real Deal

Most of us have heard of the phenomenon known as Facebook, a privately-owned social networking web site. Facebook has a continuously growing list of applications that allow users to get involved in this virtual reality. Some of the most popular and widely used aspects of Facebook include adding friends, sending messages, updating personal profiles, sharing pictures and videos, joining groups, and viewing profiles.

Some positive aspects of Facebook include having access to a fast and easy way to communicate through wall posts and private messages. Facebook also allows friends and family members all around the world to stay in touch and update each other on daily events. Additionally, Facebook is a great form of entertainment. Hundreds of thousands of people log onto their Facebook to view their profile and others' profiles in order to pass the time every day.



Despite its popularity, Facebook is not without negative components. Having any kind of Internet profile creates a lack of privacy. In order to combat this lack of privacy, Facebook users can change their privacy settings. There are options to allow only friends to see things like your photos or your wall posts. There is also an option which will block your photos and wall posts from everyone, including your Facebook friends. If users do not alter their privacy settings in any way, their information is open to anyone. People have not been hired for potential jobs or have been fired from their current job because employers have seen inappropriate wall posts or pictures. Students have also gotten into trouble for things like underage drinking and hazing because of Facebook pictures and posts. Another potential problem is stalking and harassment. Facebook allows people to anonymously see who you are, what you are doing, and who you talk to. Furthermore, anyone can message someone harassing comments through Facebook, even if the two people involved in the messages are not Facebook friends.

Want a safer profile? Be careful who you ask to be a friend or who you accept friend requests from. Keep in mind that a private profile can lead to far less problems than one which is open for all to see.

Mike Nordstrom  
Student Coordinator

## Take It From Me: Tips for Non-Traditional Students

As I prepare for my graduation in May, I want to relay my experiences as a non-traditional student to other non-traditional students at NIU. I hope to offer tips and suggestions from what I learned at NIU and how I managed to negotiate the landscape of services, academics, and technology.

Before working in Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services, I was directed to the office by the Veteran's Assistance Office and received excellent advice from the staff concerning renting an apartment to suit my needs. If you are considering living off campus or moving to a new place in the DeKalb area, utilize Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services in order to help you decide what place is best for you. It is also important for students to consider utilizing the Huskie Bus Line as it serves a variety of apartments in the area. A bus stop is located within 50 yards of my apartment, and this service takes me to a variety of locations on campus and within the DeKalb community. The bus is also free for students as part of your NIU fees.

Academically, non-traditional students returning to school should be aware of the amount of papers students are expected to write – depending on your major(s). Citations and adherence to a guiding citation style (such as American Psychological Association style) was a shock for me. If you need help in citation and/or writing style, grammar, punctuation, and paper structure, the Writing Center is a great free resource to utilize. I credit a great deal of my success in completing some quality work to the Writing Center staff. Contact the Writing Center at (815) 753-6636 for additional support. I have also valued the help and consultation that can be gained by taking advantage of professors' office hours. The professors on campus value students who take the steps necessary to achieve their academic goals and are more than willing to prevent students from becoming overwhelmed. Even if you are restricted in attending office hours, a friendly e-mail with proper professional etiquette explaining your situation will go a long way in improving your success with your studies. Create a degree plan so you do not tackle difficult classes concurrently, and ask professors if classes may conflict.

My experience with technology was very challenging due to my lack of familiarity with both Blackboard and WebBoard. Some of my initial attempts to submit assignments to these forums were unsuccessful. My professor was very understanding and spent time discussing how to use these resources. The faculty at NIU has been very patient in helping students work out problems and understanding technological issues, but you must also be willing to ask questions. Keep communication channels open with professors and students alike. Ask questions in class, in the computer labs, on the bus, or anywhere else you need help.

Be sure to also utilize the resources available from our office in order to tap into information that may be helpful to you. Visit <http://www.niu.edu/comnontrad/> or call us at (815) 753-9999. We may not have all the answers, but we will help you find the solution you are looking for.

Dennis Hill  
Graduate Student



## Q & A with the President of the College Parents' Group

Want to know more about what the College Parents' Group has to offer?

Read on for more information from Kenyetta Watkins, President of the student organization.

### **How did you find out about College Parents' Group?**

Kenyetta: During my first semester on campus, I saw posters advertising the organization. I never expected to find a group that was exactly who I am. I knew there were other parents on campus, but I had no idea there were so many. I was happy to find other people who had children and understood where I was coming from. I was excited when I saw the flyer because it was my first step to getting involved on campus.

### **What is it that College Parents' Group has to offer?**

Kenyetta: College Parents' Group offers a chance for parents to be involved on campus. We offer support to our parents from housing to studies, food to clothing. We are here to help college parents prosper just as easily as traditional students.

### **Do you have to be a parent to join?**

Kenyetta: No; because we offer child care to our parents, we are always looking for helpers to look after the children during our meetings (Wednesdays, 5:00pm-7:00pm), during our study tables (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00pm-8:00pm), and during any time we do group outings.

### **Are you looking to recruit members with certain skills or talents?**

Kenyetta: We are in need of someone to help us with marketing. We do what we can, but we are parents and sometimes do not have the time to handle the public relations aspect of the organization.

### **What initially attracted you to the organization?**

Kenyetta: Like I said, College Parents' Group has childcare available, which makes things a lot easier. I just brought my son along to meetings, and it really helped not having to find a babysitter.

### **What has your experience been like as both a student and a parent?**

Kenyetta: Being a college student and a parent is a very challenging experience. Traditional students think it is difficult to juggle class, homework, work, and activities, and imagine doing all of the above while taking care of a child. As a parent, I have to be able to provide shelter, clothing, and food for my child. This requires me to work two part-time jobs. As a student, I need to be successful so I can create a better future for my child and myself. I go to class all day and work all night. I try to spend as much time as possible with my child and maintain involvement on campus, so I found organizations that allow me to do both. Everybody should have a strong support system. Some parents don't, which is why College Parents' Group is here.

### **As the president of College Parents' Group, what are some of your goals for the group?**

Kenyetta: I want to transform this group into more of an organization. When people hear the term group, they think of support through discussions. Basically, I want to give parents a reason to come back week to week. We do support each other every way we can, but to develop into an organization we need to do more things on campus such as fundraisers and programs. We are hosting a Benefit Walk for premature babies called the March of Dimes on Saturday, April 24th. We are inviting all organizations to come join us, and it is an excellent way to earn community service.

### **What do you want non-traditional students to know about your organization?**

Kenyetta: I want non-traditional students to know that we are just like any other organization on campus. We need to provide community service, we need to have programs, and we need to promote leadership on campus. This organization is here to serve parents on campus and to give them experiences as leaders while remaining involved in their child's life.

Antoinette Williams  
Student Coordinator



## Someone You Should Know

Each month, Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services highlights a student we feel is important for you to know. This month we are featuring **Michele Johnson**, an off-campus and non-traditional student who frequents our lounge.

### What makes you a non-traditional student?

I commute to the NIU campus, and I am a thirty-one-year-old wife and mom.

### What are your future career plans?

I am studying to become a physician's assistant. I love practicing medicine. After graduating from NIU, I hope to get a job at Duke University in North Carolina. I also want to teach bedside manners and compassion to people working in the medical field. I love to teach and hope to influence people on giving patients the attention and care they need.

### What are some of the challenges of being a non-traditional student?

One of the challenges coming back to school is the financial difficulty. Academically, I feel at home. It is as natural as breathing. As far as time management is concerned, trying to fit everything in can be difficult. I am currently taking eighteen credit hours this semester and am so thankful that I have a wonderful and supportive husband that gives me the time I need to concentrate on my studies. I admire single moms because of their ability to do it all - I don't know how they do it!

### How has Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services helped meet your needs as a returning student?

I think that the office really helped me get involved. In one of the weekly update emails your office sends, I noticed the information about the Forward Together Forward scholarship, so I went ahead and applied. Soon after that, I became a finalist and then won the scholarship!

### How did it feel to win an award so important to the NIU community?

It was certainly humbling. This award is without a doubt very important to the campus, and there is a huge sense of community that goes along with it. It just validates how you want to stay at NIU despite the tragedy of 2.14.

### What is your greatest accomplishment?

I feel that keeping my family intact is a huge accomplishment for me. With the external impacts in my life, my family is my backbone.

### Who inspires you?

My mom. She is a leukemia survivor. She raised me by herself and taught me the value of an education and that people can start over and change their life. I also feel Michelle Obama is another person who inspires me. She always talks about her husband and takes care of him in an uplifting way.

### What are some interesting facts about you that people may not know?

I am blind in one eye. Because my mother was never able to explain the reason why, I set out on a quest to find out the reason. I then enrolled in an ophthalmic technical program which led to my interest in medicine. I also owned my own business where I would go to different companies and teach their employees how to maintain and provide excellent customer service. I also am going to China this summer.

### What would you like students to learn from you?

If you aim for a goal, you can do anything you want. Creating a positive attitude will lead many doors to open for you. When I finally realized this and changed my life around this year, I started having the best year of my life.

Audrey Barsanti Gonzalez  
Student Coordinator

## Join our Listserv!

Interested in what Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services has to offer? Join our weekly listserv! As an off-campus and/or non-traditional student, it is important to stay connected and informed about issues that directly affect you. Joining our listserv will allow you to receive weekly updates with the programs and services we provide along with other important dates and events on and off campus. Come by our office (located in the lower level of the Holmes Student Center, room 023J) to provide us with your name and email to sign up for the program, or simply email us at [comnontrad@niu.edu](mailto:comnontrad@niu.edu) and request to be on our listserv!

## Important Dates to Remember

As the semester progresses, students are expected to know many important dates pertaining to class schedules and registration deadlines. We want to make sure you stay up to date, so we compiled a list of the most important dates of the semester.

- April 2: Last day to change a second-half-semester course from credit to audit or from audit to credit
- April 9: Last day to withdraw from a second-half-semester course
- April 16: Last day to change or declare a major for the spring semester
- April 30: Reading Day
- May 1, 3-7: Final examinations
- May 3: Last day to apply for summer 2010 graduation
- May 8: End of spring semester and undergraduate commencement

If you want more information on these dates, please access this web site: <http://catalog.niu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=319>.

## Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services Calendar of Events Spring 2010

### April 2010

**27th:** Study Break, 11:30am-1:30pm, Holmes Student Center, lower level

Take a break from studying for finals to enjoy a free lunch and sign up for a free ten minute seated massage.

**28th:** Good Evening Huskies, 4:45pm, Graham Hall  
Enjoy a free snack with us as you prepare for your evening class.

## Ideas? Suggestions? Let Us Know!

If you have any program ideas, suggestions for improving our services, or anything else you wish to share, do not hesitate to contact us via email at [comnontrad@niu.edu](mailto:comnontrad@niu.edu) or call our office at (815) 753-9999.

## Contact the Staff

### Director:

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### Student Coordinators:

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## Office Information

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**Web site:** [www.niu.edu/comnontrad/](http://www.niu.edu/comnontrad/)

**Facebook Group:** NIU Comm & Nontrad

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