

Nov. 2010

HUSKIE CONNECTION

OFF-CAMPUS & NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

Meet Our Staff!

Our office welcomes four new staff members this semester. Join us in welcoming them!



Destiny Riley, Graduate Assistant

Destiny received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Family & Child Studies with an emphasis in Family Social Services in August 2010. She is very excited to start her first year in the Master's program for Adult & Higher Education.

She is interested in a career in student affairs and looks forward to seeing what the field as well as the program has to offer. Her ultimate goal is to earn a Doctorate in Adult & Higher Education. She hopes to use her experiences as an off-campus student and a recent graduate of NIU to help other students get the most out of their time on campus.



Kristney Vaulx, Graduate Assistant

Kristney is originally from Kankakee, Illinois. She graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in 2004. She is currently a graduate student at NIU pursuing her Master's degree in Adult

& Higher Education. Before coming to NIU, Kristney worked as a counselor for three years at a domestic violence agency in her hometown. She is also a mother of two and enjoys reading, scrapbooking, and photography.



**Jody Danna-Hoehne,
Student Coordinator**

Jody is originally from Elgin, Illinois, and he graduated from Elgin High School in 2008. He is a junior majoring in Actuarial Science with a minor in Finance. To put it simply,

Jody likes to be involved on campus. He is currently a member of Alpha Phi Omega, a co-ed service fraternity, Delta Chi Fraternity, and Actuarial Club. This past summer, Jody was an intern at the Public Building Commission of Chicago in the finance department. In his spare time, Jody enjoys being socially and physically active.



**Arturo Jimenez,
Student Coordinator**

Arturo is originally from Mexico. He transferred to NIU after earning his Associate of Arts degree from Black Hawk College in Moline, Illinois. Before transferring to NIU, he spent a

year in Mexico where he took classes at a university in Queretaro. Arturo is an off-campus student and is currently completing his Visual Communication degree with a minor in Communication: Media Studies. He hopes to use his knowledge of design to effectively inform students about Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services' events throughout the year. He is interested in a career in design as well as film production and enjoys drawing, kung-fu, and break dancing.

Apartment Searching

Renting your first apartment or moving into a new apartment can be both exciting and overwhelming. Before you take the leap and sign a lease, there are several things you should consider. Here are a few tips that can make your apartment search a bit easier:



1) Create a Budget!

The first step you should take before you begin searching for apartments is creating a budget. This will help you evaluate what you can afford to pay for items like rent, utilities (electric, gas, water, cable, internet, and phone), personal items, and food per month. This is also a good time to talk with family members or potential roommates about what they may be able to contribute. Want an example of a budget worksheet? Utilize the following link: <http://financialplan.about.com/od/moneyandcollegestudents/l/blcollbudget.htm>

2) Plan Ahead!

Now that you have set a budget for yourself, it's time to start thinking about where you want to live and with whom you'd like to live. The best time to start your apartment search is in January or February if you plan to sign a lease that August. If you have a potential roommate in mind, start making appointments with local management companies together so that you can view units and learn more about the company's policies and payment options. Starting your apartment search early gives you more time to save for upcoming expenses or down payments such as a security deposit.

3) Take Your Time!

Do not be in a rush to sign a lease! Remember, this is a contract that you will be legally bound to for up to a year, so make sure you read over the lease with your potential roommates or a parent or guardian. The policies and regulations of the lease should reflect your values and lifestyle. In other words, do not sign a lease for a quiet lifestyle building if you like to play your music loudly! Also, if you are signing a lease with another individual, it is important that you both set up an agreement before signing the lease and moving in together. This agreement should address issues such as sharing bills, sharing food, having guests over, and privacy. The following link provides an example of a roommate agreement: <http://students.berkeley.edu/files/osl/Attorney/Form%20-%20Roommate%20Agreement.doc>.

Still a bit confused about how to begin your apartment search? Feel free to contact our office at 815-753-9999 for more guidance and information. You can also visit our Off-Campus Housing Web page at <http://www.niu.edu/comnontrad/housing/index.shtml> for links to the Northern Star Housing Guide, Places 4 Students, and much more.

Destiny Riley
Graduate Assistant



Study Tips and Strategies

As the end of the semester quickly approaches, many students find themselves wondering how they can successfully study and pass their final exams. As you enter your final weeks of class, it is important that you pay attention in class, ask questions, take good notes, and study.

Although it can sometimes be difficult, paying attention in class is crucial, especially this time of year. Don't sleep, text, or check your Facebook account, especially as the teacher is going over some last-minute information. If you're not paying attention in class, you're not learning the information that will be on those remaining quizzes, tests, and finals.

It is also important to ask about anything you don't understand. Teachers are there to help you learn and most often want you to participate in class. Asking a question not only provides you with information, but it can also help you learn about what answers teachers are looking for and how to find those answers. The more information you have, the better you can succeed on exams.

Taking good notes is important, especially if you tend to rush while taking notes and end up writing illegibly. Notes should be clear and easy to read so you can study properly and learn the information well.

Once you know how to best obtain and retain information, you have to study! Know what kind of atmosphere best suits you so that you can study productively. Even though it is important to study hard, it is also important not to overwork yourself. We suggest taking small breaks throughout your studying. This will allow you to refresh your perspective and help you become that much more focused when you return to studying. Good luck on finals!

Arturo Jimenez
Student Coordinator

ACCESS A+ Program

Having trouble with long reading assignments? Do you feel like you are studying hard but not getting the grades you expect? Do you suffer from test anxiety? Are you feeling disorganized and overwhelmed? ACCESS A+ is a free resource for all students who could use assistance to study more efficiently and learn more effectively. The A+ program provides one-on-one or small group instruction in effective textbook reading or study strategies. Our goal is to help you be a successful student.

ACCESS A+ works with students on a regular basis to develop study strategies that can be used immediately. For example, we can help you analyze your textbook for critical concepts to help you read more effectively and efficiently. We can provide you with note taking tips so you can keep track of important ideas, teach you test-taking strategies, and help you learn to control test anxiety. We also work with you to construct a schedule for effectively managing your time. All types of study strategies can be learned and improved with help from ACCESS A+.

Pre-nursing students may find it helpful to attend A+'s Passing the ACCUPLACER Workshop, which is held every Tuesday afternoon from 3:00p.m. to 5:30p.m. in Grant South Tutoring Center (located in the lower level of Grant South). The workshop focuses on critical thinking skills, test-taking strategies, academic vocabulary, and test anxiety. Feel free to drop in as your schedule permits.

The A+ program is part of ACCESS, the NIU tutoring service which provides various types of tutoring assistance. Additional information about ACCESS programs can be found at www.tutoring.niu.edu. Appointments are available by calling Carolyn Hudspeth at 815-752-1126. The ACCESS offices are located in Williston 100.

Carol Deemer
ACCESS Coordinator

How to Reduce Stress During Finals

Now that you have some study tips and strategies to help you do well on your finals, you also need to know how to reduce the stress that inevitably accompanies the end of the semester. Many students are trying to balance classes, work, and sometimes a commute and/or a family, and finals week can add stress to an already busy life. Prolonged stress can manifest itself in the body in the form of a headache or an upset stomach, and it can even weaken the body's immune system over time. Follow these five tips to help you beat stress during finals week:

- 1) Get plenty of rest.** Sleep is how the body recharges itself. The average adult needs between six and eight hours of sleep each night in order to function properly.
- 2) Eat healthy.** It is imperative that you eat meals rich in fruits and vegetables. Foods such as whole grain cereal, oatmeal, nuts, and fish are considered brain food! It may also be beneficial to eat six small meals instead of three large meals, especially during finals week. This way, you will keep your energy steady throughout the day.
- 3) Exercise.** The key to making exercise doable is finding some type of physical activity that you enjoy doing. Exercising reduces the level of cortisol (a stress hormone) in your body and actually gives you a natural high! Continue reading our newsletter to find out more about exercising at the Recreation Center on campus.
- 4) Learn how to say "No."** Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, refuse to accept added responsibilities when you're close to reaching your limits. Taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress.
- 5) Learn to manage your time.** Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. If you plan ahead and make sure you don't overextend yourself, you can alter the amount of stress you're under.

Using these stress-relieving tips with your newly learned study strategies can help you finish strong at the end of your semester!

Kristney Vaulx
Graduate Assistant

Dress Code at the Recreation Center

This past August, the Recreation Center implemented a change to its dress code policy. Everyone who uses the Recreation Center must now wear a sleeved shirt. Sleeveless shirts, cut-offs, and tank tops are no longer allowed. If you are wearing one of these items, you have two options. You can buy a Recreation Services t-shirt for \$8 or you can go back to your place of residence and change. Either way, you cannot use the Recreation Center without adhering to this new policy.

This new change has a unique motivation. In the past year, there has been an outbreak of MSRA, which is short for Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus Infection. MRSA is a staph infection that is resistant to methicillin and other various antibiotics. A staph infection is a group of bacteria that has caused an infection, and MSRA is basically the "super" version of this because of its resistance to the antibiotics that are commonly used to treat staph infections. Typical MSRA infections are mild infections of the skin and can be treated with proper skin care and antibiotics to which MSRA is not resistant. MSRA is usually transferred from individuals with active MSRA infections through physical contact, whether direct or indirect. Indirect transmission is of greater concern because an infected person can touch something and transfer the bacteria. Many students use the Recreation Center, which increases the chance of someone having this infection or being a carrier of it. Wearing sleeved shirts protects the vulnerable and infection-prone area of the armpit, an area where sweat accumulates and infection can easily be transferred. NIU and the Recreation Center have the students', faculty's, and general public's best interests in mind when implementing this new dress code policy.

All students, including off-campus and non-traditional students, do not have to pay to access the Recreation Center (all students pay through their student fees). The Rec Center is great for students to utilize year round, especially during the winter months when your options of exercising outdoors are limited. Spend some time lifting weights, using the elliptical machines, or joining a group fitness class to stay fit while having fun. For more information on the variety of resources the Recreation Center has to offer, visit their Web site: <http://www.niu.edu/recservices/>.

If you have further questions about this new policy or about services at the Recreation Center, contact the staff directly at 815-753-0231.

Jody Danna-Hoehne
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 Jim Schroeder, a non-traditional and commuter student.

Where do you commute from?

Rockford; I've lived there all of my life.

What makes you a non-traditional student?

I am a veteran and have been in the military for almost 20 years. I was also an undergrad 15 years ago and pursued a degree in Human Services. Now I have come back to school to get my Master's in Special Education.

What is it like to be a non-traditional student at NIU? Do you feel different from any of the other students?

Actually no, I feel I fit right in. I am a very outgoing person, so I did not find any difficulty coming back to school. The only difference I see between me and other "typical" graduate students is how they want to hang out after class or late at night, whereas I want to just go home and relax after a long day in class. Also, coming to Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services' lounge really allows me to unwind and do some homework when I need to and meet others like me.

What do you like most about coming to the Lounge?

I like that fact that it is a quieter, kind of off-road area for me to hang out. I have never been much of a library or computer lab kind of guy. I like things that are kind of off the beaten path where I can eat, meet people, and study all at the same time.

What do you see yourself doing in the next couple of years?

I know that I want to specifically work with students who have learning disabilities or behavior disorders. In doing so, I know that I will have to work for two to three years at a high-risk/at-needs school as part of my Troops to Teachers program I am currently enrolled in.

What else are you involved in on campus?

I am part of the Veterans Club on campus, and I love it. We do community service around DeKalb to create awareness because there will be an influx of veterans coming back to school soon.

What do you feel are some of your greatest accomplishments?

Being dyslexic myself, I feel I can help other students who may face the same issues I have. In the past, I was able to assist those students by using repetition and really working things through in order to help students who struggle because of their disability.

What are some of your hobbies? I like to golf and go to any Rockford Riverhawks games – I generally enjoy any kind of sporting event.

What advice would you give to other returning students, non-traditional students, or veterans to help them succeed in college?

I would say, especially for this campus, going to the Off-Campus & Non-Traditional Student Services' Web site to find out what kind of events they have for you to meet people and help you figure your way around campus would be a tremendous help. Also, one big thing to remember is to talk to traditional students; do not shut them out. They are facing a few of the same problems that you are facing and they could possibly give you some good advice as to how to handle certain things.

Name three adjectives that best describe you.

Happy-go-lucky, carefree, and spiritual.

Audrey Barsanti Gonzalez
Student Coordinator

Three Simple Steps to Hosting a Successful Thanksgiving Dinner



Thanksgiving is the time of year when some of the most valuable memories are made for many people. Family and friends gather to enjoy each other's company while enjoying delicious food. Although this time should be enjoyable and relaxing, the thought of hosting a Thanksgiving dinner might seem a little overwhelming. However, by following a few simple steps, you can ensure a successful Thanksgiving dinner and gain the appreciation and admiration of your guests.

Step 1: Begin to Plan

Start by making lists, with the guest list being the most important. Decide how many people you feel comfortable hosting in your home. You can allow more space by rearranging furniture in your home and renting or borrowing chairs from another source. Create a schedule that goes over each detail from cleaning house, gathering recipes, shopping, cooking, and all other "to-dos" so that you aren't overwhelmed with last minute chores.

Step 2: Food

Create a dinner menu that keeps in mind special dietary restrictions. Plan to buy non-perishable items the week before and other menu items later. Keep in mind that you can buy the turkey ahead of time and freeze it if necessary. If you wait too long, your selections may be limited. Remember that a turkey takes a long time to defrost, so plan enough time for defrosting. Begin baking two days ahead of time and season the turkey at least the night before. Cook whatever you can the day before and wake up early the day of to prepare the turkey.

Step 3: The Day of

Wake up early and begin cooking the turkey and preparing other dishes. Give the house a once over and set up tables and chairs for your guests. As they begin to arrive, the meal should be ready or close to being done.

The most important thing to do on Thanksgiving is to enjoy your family and friends and appreciate their company. Although hosting may seem like a lot of work, keep in mind the reason for the holiday. Be thankful for all the people you have in your life and don't forget to enjoy the fruits of your labor! To get you started on your menu, we recommend the following recipe to make a delicious Pumpkin Cream Pie:



Pumpkin Cream Pie

Ingredients

- 2 cups cold milk
- 2 (3.5 ounce) packages instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 cup frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 1 (9 inch) pie crust, baked

Directions

1. Combine milk, pie filling mix, pumpkin, spices, and whipped topping in a deep, narrow-bottom bowl. Beat at lowest speed of an electric mixer for about 1 minute. Pour filling into cooled pie shell.
2. Chill until set, about 3 hours.

Courtesy of AllRecipes.com

Antoinette Schrader
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 both on and off campus. Come by our office (located on the lower level of the Holmes Student Center, Room 023J) to give us your name and email to sign up for the program, or simply email us at commnontrad@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.

- November 12: Last day to withdraw from a second-half-semester course or from the University
- November 19: Last day to change or declare a major for the fall semester
- November 23: Last day for an undergraduate to make up a mark of incomplete from spring semester 2010
- November 24: Last day for an undergraduate to make up a mark of incomplete from spring semester 2010
- November 29: Resumption of classes
- December 1: Last day to apply for spring 2011 graduation via self-service in MyNIU
- December 4: Classes end
- December 6-11: Final examinations
- December 11: Graduate Commencement
- December 12: Undergraduate Commencement
- December 12: End of fall semester

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

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

November 2010

30th: Study Break, 11:30a.m.-1:30p.m., Holmes Student Center, lower level
Take a break from studying for finals to enjoy a free lunch and sign up for a free 10-minute professional seated massage.

For the most updated event information, please check out our events page at: <http://www.niu.edu/ComNonTrad/news/upcomingevents.shtml>

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 commnontrad@niu.edu or call our office at 815-753-9999.

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OFF-CAMPUS &
NON-TRADITIONAL
STUDENT SERVICES

NIU NORTHERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
& ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

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