



Insights

TRiO
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Visit the SSS on the web: <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/services/sss>

In This Issue...	
Scholarship/Financial Aid Information	2
Student Leadership Council	3
Lend Me A Tenor!	3
Procrastination	5
Student Teaching Tips	5
Etiquette Dinner	6

Tips for completing the FAFSA

Filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can sometimes be tricky. The following pointers should help you through the process.

Why fill out a FAFSA?

The FAFSA is the first step in the financial aid process. It is used to apply for federal financial aid, such as grants, student loans, and work-study. Even if you don't think you are eligible for financial aid, you should still fill it out because many states and schools also use it to award non-federal aid.

Online or paper?

There are two ways to complete the FAFSA. You can do it online at www.fafsa.ed.gov or you can submit a paper copy, which you can get by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID. Most financial aid administrators prefer the online method because it cuts the processing time in half. If you [file the FAFSA online](#), make sure to get a [PIN number](#) sometime in December, so you will be ready to complete the form as soon as possible after January 1st. Filling out the FAFSA is free when you go through www.fafsa.ed.gov, so be sure to type in the correct web address. Some websites with similar names will charge a fee to submit your application.

When is it due?

Deadlines for aid from your state, school, and private sources are usually earlier than deadlines for federal aid. Most colleges have financial aid priority deadlines in early February; therefore, it is important that you apply for aid as soon as possible after January 1st.

What materials are needed to fill out the FAFSA?

- Student's driver's license and Social Security card
- Income tax returns or as close an estimate as possible
- W-2 forms and other records of money earned
- Current bank statements
- Records and documentation of other untaxed income received such as welfare benefits, Social Security income, veteran's benefits, AFDC, or military or clergy allowances
- Records of stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and other investments
- Current mortgage information
- Business or farm records (if applicable)

How can errors be avoided?

- Do not leave a field blank. If a question does not apply to you, write N/A.
- Use the 1040 federal tax return, not the W-2 form, for reporting income and taxes paid.
- Don't use nicknames. Use your legal name as it appears on your Social Security card.
- Don't forget to sign the application. Your parents must sign it too if you are filing as a dependent.

What happens next?

You should receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) in approximately three to four weeks after you submit your FAFSA. This report will state your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), restate what you put on the FAFSA, and give you the opportunity to correct wrong information. A financial aid administrator at your college will then put together your financial aid package and send you an [award letter](#) around the end of March or first of April. The award letter will tell you what financial aid you are eligible to receive.



For questions or assistance with the FAFSA, please contact Brenda Johnson at brendaj@nwmissouri.edu or x.1259. Her office is located in Student Support Services, AD 362.

StrengthsQuest Month — March 2011

By: Ally Varner



March is national StrengthsQuest month and Student Support Services is celebrating all month long by encouraging members to use the resources StrengthsQuest provides.

StrengthsQuest begins with the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment. The results from the assessment list your top 5 individual talents from a list of 30. Along with your results, you will also receive information on how your personal talents and strengths can lead to success. The information you gain from the assessment can help you in many areas. Over 600 campuses use StrengthsQuest to help their students gain valuable information about themselves to use both now and in the future.

Struggling with writing your resume? Try listing your StrengthsQuest results in the heading as your personal strengths. Working with a group on a project? Use the StrengthsQuest Team Talent Map. This can be accessed by logging on to the StrengthsQuest website, clicking My StrengthsQuest, and clicking Team Talent Map. This feature allows students to type in member's information to discover which members can offer with skills in different areas based on their SQ results. The Team Talent Map allows you to better delegate roles for group projects, organizational committees, or work-related events. By discovering and applying your personal SQ personality traits, you can work more efficiently.

My personal traits have helped me with my school work by addressing which ways I like to learn best. These traits have also helped me in my personal relationships by discovering how I communicate most effectively with others. I have been able to apply myself in the areas of communication and discipline as a result of taking the StrengthsQuest survey. I have also enjoyed discovering what my friends' results were and how we are alike and different. My StrengthsQuest personality is Achiever, Communication, Positivity, Discipline, and Learner. Do you know what yours is? Be sure to attend all events hosted by SSS promoting StrengthsQuest this month!

For more information on how to take StrengthsQuestion, see your mentor or Brenda Johnson at x1259 (AD 362) or brendaj@nwmissouri.edu.



Online Degree Audit System

The online Degree Audit is available in 'CatPAWS for catalog years starting in Fall 2006 to Fall 2010. Click on **Student** tab, then **Degree Audit** link to view your Degree Audit. Review your audit and consult your advisor if you have questions. **NOTE: For catalog years prior to Fall 2006, you will continue to use the DARS printed audits available in the Registrar's Office.** Changes to catalog year, degree, major and minor should be submitted to the Registrar's Office.

Is Graduate School for You?

By: Justin Ranney

So have you ever had anyone ask the one question every student despises hearing: what are your plans after graduation? No worries, almost every student faces this question and it sends them into this downward spiral thinking that they have no clue what their plans are! It is important to plan for your future, but as the future is always uncertain your plans might be as well!

Maybe you're not sure that you want to jump right into a career, and that's ok! Many students decide that they want to go to graduate school and obtain a higher level or more specialized degree to make them stand out above the rest of the competition. Having a graduate degree can make you more hireable in many career fields and also make you more qualified for upper level positions. If you are considering graduate school it is a good idea to start evaluating the program that you want to go into early as many schools do not have one general application deadline, but rather determine deadlines by area of study. At Northwest we have a Graduate Office that you can visit to get more details and also an excellent graduate school website that you can obtain masses of information from. My suggestion would be to start on the website and figure out what areas or degrees interest you and then to stop by the Graduate Office with any questions that you may have.

A few considerable differences with graduate school that you need to note are that full time is only 9 hours in comparison to 12 hours for undergraduate. Also with graduate school you can apply for a graduate assistantship on campus that will provide you with a 20 hour a week position that will not only include a paid stipend but will also wave your tuition for classes! When looking into such positions it is important to start early as they can be very competitive because the program provides students with so many benefits. Not only will it help you to pay for school but it also helps students to work with full time faculty and staff to get a taste of some real world work which could help you to decide what career path you want to go down. Many graduate schools have lengthy applications and have several documents that you will have to turn in with them so it is very important to start looking at the different universities and programs that you are interested in so that you can start to prepare your applications and statements. It is also common for schools to ask for letters of recommendation so be thinking of those you have worked with and also professors that you would request a recommendation from as many schools like to see letters from several different sources from varying backgrounds.



If you are interested in graduate school make sure to do your research and visit the appropriate offices as they have endless information and are more than willing to help you to find your way. If you need any help with searching for programs or just getting started the SSS staff is a great place to start and would be more than willing to participate in building your future!

SAVE THE DATE!

***SSS Open House & Graduation
Reception***

April 21, 2011, AD 360

11 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

**Don't know when your final exams are scheduled?
Check out NWMSU online schedule for finals:**

<http://www.nwmissouri.edu/registrar/finals.htm>

When can I register for Fall 2011?

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Earned Credit Hrs</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Earned Credit Hrs</u>	<u>Date</u>
Senior	130 and above	March 14	Sophomore	50 and above	April 4
	120 and above	March 15		45 and above	April 5
	110 and above	March 16		40 and above	April 6
	100 and above	March 17		35 and above	April 7
	90 and above	March 18		30 and above	April 8
Junior	80 and above	March 28	Freshman	20 and above	April 11
	75 and above	March 29		15 and above	April 12
	70 and above	March 30		10 and above	April 13
	65 and above	March 31		5 and above	April 14
	60 and above	April 1		0 and above	April 15

For more information on registration for Fall 2011, visit the website of NWMSU's registrar's office (<http://www.nwmissouri.edu/registrar>) or see your advisor.

Student Support Services
360 Administration Building
Northwest Missouri State University
800 University Drive
Maryville, MO 64468