YOUR ARM NEWSLETTER

.

Setting A Budget You Can Live With

WHAT'S ON WESTSIDE?

ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE LIFE

TIME MANAGEMENT



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Meet Your 2024-2025 Academic Resource Mentors



Academic Resource Mentors are student peers who play an integral role in the establishment of an academic environment in the residence halls. They are an essential component of the CULTURE program for the **Department of Housing & Residence Life**. In addition to providing programming in the residence halls, ARMs are available to assist you in obtaining information and providing resources about majors and academic programs at the University. The ARMs also are available to coach you through any issues you may have academically, providing you with a wealth of information on study skills, time management, and other techniques to help you to be more successful.



College can be an amazing time full of fun, growth, and learning. You're taking exciting and interesting classes, making new friends, and getting involved in activities on campus. You might also be working or taking on a leadership position on campus on top of everything else going on. You may be finding that your schedule is becoming extremely busy very quickly, which can be quite stressful if you don't know how to manage your time wisely. Luckily, I'm here to provide you with some time management tips to help you complete all your tasks while also making time for social life, self-care, and sleep!

1. Use a calendar and/or a planner to keep track of events and deadlines.

Events and due dates can pile up quickly, and it can be hard to keep track of everything you have going on. One thing that could really help with remembering what you have to do is to invest in a calendar and/or planner. There are many options when it comes to this kind of resource, and it might be a good idea to try a few of them out to figure out which one works best for you! For example, there are digital and physical versions and smaller portable and larger stationary versions of both calendars and planners. Calendars can help track your time and schedule while planners help you manage your time and keep track of exams, homework assignments, and other to-do lists. Both are very useful tools that can help you stay organized!

2. Set reminders

With all the hustle and bustle of college life, some important things can sometimes slip through the cracks. We're all human, and even with helpful tools like a calendar or planner, forgetfulness can still happen every now and then. To help further combat this, it might be a good idea to set some reminders for yourself. This could be in whatever form works best for you, including digital reminders using the app on your phone or leaving post-it notes in places you know you will see them. This extra step could be the thing that really helps you stay on top of everything you need to do.

3. Prioritize

When you have a lot on your plate, it can be helpful to decide which of your tasks are most important in the moment and tackle those first. It might be a good idea to make a list of the tasks you have to complete and rank them from most to least pressing and then complete them in that order. This list can be a great way to organize your tasks if you are feeling overwhelmed with everything you must do. Additionally, while it's easier said than done, it might be a good idea to complete the tasks you are dreading the most first instead of putting them off to relieve yourself of that stress.

4. Make time for fun and selfcare!

While college can be stressful and a lot of work, it is also supposed to be FUN! Making time to do things you enjoy and find relaxing can help prevent burnout and make your college experience much more enjoyable. Set aside time for hobbies, hanging out with friends, joining clubs, watching your favorite TV shows and movies, reading, attending events on campus like the ones in your dorm building, spending time in nature, and doing anything else that will make your personal college experience more fun and fulfilling!

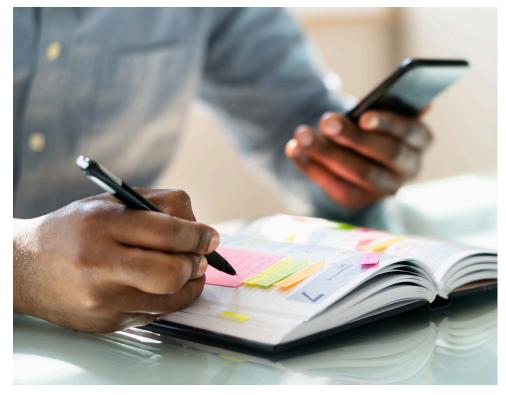
5. Find support

There are SO many resources on campus that you can turn to for help! One resource, for example, is the Academic Resource Mentors (ARMs). ARMs are academic coaches in all the res halls who are there to help you with strategies that will help you succeed academically, like good time management! There is at least one ARM in every building who you can reach out to if you could use some assistance with time management, and they will help you come up with a personalized plan to manage your time that works for you! I hope you can use these time management tips to create a system that works for you and that allows you to complete everything on your plate AND make time for yourself! Have a great semester filled with excellent time management skills!

"Time Management for College Students: 8 Tips & Strategies." Purdue Global, www.purdueglobal.edu/blog/student-life/timemanagement-busy-college-students/.

Lparsons. "8 Time Management Tips for Students." Harvard Summer School, 9 Nov. 2022, summer.harvard.edu/blog/8-time-managementtips-for-students/.

ONE THING THAT COULD REALLY HELP WITH REMEMBERING WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO IS TO INVEST IN A CALENDAR AND/OR PLANNER.





What's On Westside? by Tim Hynan, Grasso ARM

Welcome back to Western! With a packed residential population this semester, there are a ton of returners, transfers and rising sophomore living on Westside. This may leave a lot of newcomers wondering, *What's on Westside*?

A big part of the Academic Resource Mentors' job on Westside is connecting with upperclassmen residents about their future. Grad school? Work force? These decisions can be daunting. Thankfully, no matter what you decide, the **Career Success Center** in the Westside Campus Center is here to help you stand out in your applications. This is a great resource for building your professional portfolio and resume and preparing you for the post-graduation job environment. Along with resume coaching, you can also have professional headshots done to enhance your applications and presence on LinkedIn and other job search platforms.

Along with these everyday resources, the Career Success Center also holds events throughout the semester like job fairs, expert panels, or seminars on important life skills. Check their webpage at: <u>www.wcsu.edu/careersuccess</u>.

Outside of academic and future planning, there are still opportunities for residents to have fun and socialize here on Westside. **The Daily Grind**, Westside's coffee shop, is a popular spot for students to meet up, study, or refuel between classes. Also, Sundays through Thursdays, late night food options are available 8:30pm to 10pm and meal swipes can be used to purchase these meals. The Daily Grind also serves Starbucks brand products and has a selection of grab-and-go food options as well.

You can check out for information about The Daily Grind here: Daily Grind

For the sports fans on campus, look no further than the WAC. The Westside Athletic Center, or the WAC, is home to 4 teams this fall: Women's Field Hockey, Women's Soccer, Men's Soccer and Men's Football. With free access to all home games for Western students, there are plenty of exciting games to attend this fall, along with potential for repeat magic for Men's Football and Soccer. There is also plenty of excitement for in-conference games. Along with the WAC, The O'Neill Center will be hosting home Women's Volleyball as they look to improve on their 3-seed finish for the LEC tournament last fall. Outside the O'Neill Center you will find the tennis courts which will host Women's Tennis matches this fall

For more information regarding home games and team schedules visit: WCSU Athletics

With Pinney Hall offline this year many Westside residents were dreading the drive to Midtown to hit the gym. Thankfully, Rec was able to gain space in the basement of Centennial Hall to keep a fitness center open on Westside. Here residents will find an assortment of machines, free weights, cables, and cardio options to meet their hearts, no pun intended, desire. For those looking for the gym, the entrance is located on the parking garage entrance side of the building. Bring your student ID and water!

For more information about the fitness centers on campus including hours, Rec, and the great events they'll host this semester, checkout their Instagram: <u>@wolvesrec</u>

Westside may be big, but it is still packed with resources and activities to keep you active during your free time this fall. I hope you can take advantage of everything Western has to offer and I look forward to working with you this semester if you are in Grasso Hall!



You can check out for information about The Daily Grind here: Daily Grind

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ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE LIFE

College is an amazing time, full of different experiences, changes, and opportunities. It's also a huge transition for many students, let alone adjusting to college. Many first year students are integrating into an unfamiliar setting and dealing with changes in their health and wellness. A well-rounded lifestyle is essential in ensuring your overall health and success, from stress and sleep management to eating nutritiously and staying active. Cultivating these good habits now can help you succeed in the next phase of life and lay the groundwork for a successful college career. Now never fear - I have some tips and tricks to make adjusting to college life easier than ever!

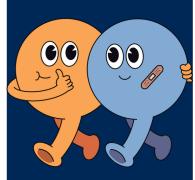
• Having a routine

Routines are something many of us have gotten used to, and most of us thrive with them. In high school, you might have had a schedule that kept you accountable and on track. With courses at different times, the ability to see friends whenever you want, and nobody waking you early to get going, you may find that the absence of structure is making you stressed. Establishing a routine has been shown to reduce stress and increase motivation and productivity. Think about scheduling what time you will get out of bed, exercise, do classwork, eat, hang out with friends, and what time you will go to bed.











Consistency can help in reducing anxiety while also improving concentration and tolerance to stress.

Creating a support/social network

As you begin your journey through university, developing a strong social support network can make a big difference. Social support can take many different shapes and come from an array of individuals in your life, such as friends, family, schoolmates, and colleagues. Making relationships with peers, joining student clubs and organizations, and attending campus activities are excellent ways to meet others and develop a sense of camaraderie.

Surrounding yourself with supportive people will help you get through the various stages of college life. It will allow you to develop your skills and share your experiences. Research has shown a correlation between social relationships and many aspects of one's general wellbeing. Poor social support has been linked to increased depression, loneliness, and stress. A strong network of friends may help us gain motivation, confidence, connection, and coping with stress. Remember that relationships and connections you form now can be great sources of support, direction, and influence throughout your college career and beyond.

• Practicing mindfulness

As you go through the unfamiliar surroundings of college life, mindfulness can be an effective strategy for staying grounded and balanced. Mindfulness means being present in the moment and welcoming every moment with acknowledge, openness, and awareness. Simple activities such as taking a few deep breaths before beginning your day, devoting your attention to the environment while strolling across campus, or having a meaningful chat with a friend can all help you be present. Meditation, writing in a journal, or just spending a few moments each day thinking about what you are grateful for can all help reduce anxiety and increase focus. Mindfulness reduces stress, improves focus, and boosts your overall health, aiding you to better cope with the challenges of college and seize every opportunity.

Adjusting to life in college can be difficult, but prioritizing your wellbeing, making relationships, and staying mindful can help make the adjustment easier. Embrace this new phase with a positive attitude, and you will be thriving in no time!

Citations:

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Setting a Budget You Can Live with

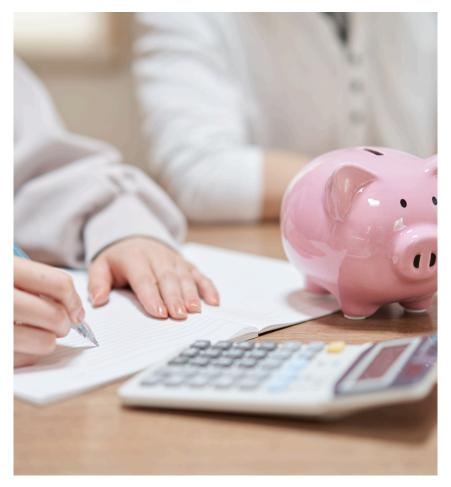
by Jess Gleason Litchfield Hall ARM Let's be honest. Everything is expensive these days. In college, it can feel impossible to afford to buy what you need and want. Setting a budget can be valuable in determining how much money you can spend weekly. Additionally, learning the skills of budgeting now will set you up for financial literacy in the future. Below are a few steps to help you become your own financial advisor!

1). Figure out your total income.

As a college student, income can look different than you would imagine. Income can come from family financial assistance, refunds from the financial aid office, workstudy income, or income from an off-campus job(Ngo, 2024). Knowing how much money you will earn will inform you how much you can spend during the month.

2). Analyze and Categorize your Expenses into "Wants" vs. "Needs."

Here's an exercise you can do right now. Go onto your bank's website and look at your spending and income over the last month.



When examining the previous month's spending, categorize each purchase as either a "Want" or a "Need" (Ngo, 2024). A "Need" is something necessary that you can't live without. This can include groceries or a car insurance bill. A "Want" is a more frivolous expense. Something like a coffee at Starbucks or a new video game would be considered a want. Identifying wants and needs can help you decide what you need to buy and what you can wait until you have money saved!

3). Review your expenses.

This step involves a little math. You will want to add all your expenses from the previous month and subtract that number from your monthly earnings(Ngo, 2024). If the result is positive, then congrats! You have extra money that can be spent or stashed away into a savings account for a rainy day. If the number is negative, don't fret! It may be time to reevaluate your spending to ensure you don't spend more than you make.

4). Setting a budget that you can live with!

Since you've done all of the prep work and know your current financial situation, you can create a budget and decide what expenses can be revised or eliminated (Ngo, 2024). This step can be tricky as cutting



Here, you can place a caption for the photo. It can be a short description or it can credit the production team.

activities or expenditures from your budget can be difficult, especially if all of your friends are doing something and you don't want to feel left out. In times like this, you could suggest attending an on-campus event (which is included in your tuition!!) or doing free activities such as hiking! Additionally, if budgeting on your own is tricky, you can use apps to help you visualize and manage your budget. Apps such as Intuit Mint and NerdWallet can be valuable tools for understanding your expenses and keeping track of your finances in real-time!

Managing and navigating your expenses can be daunting, but it's never too late to understand your financial situation and create a budget that works for you! The best kinds of budgets are the ones that you know you'll be able to maintain and be consistent with! Taking the time to learn how to budget now will be a valuable skill that you can use throughout your entire life!

Citation

Ngo, Chinh. "Guide to Budgeting for College Students: BestColleges." BestColleges.Com, 27 Aug. 2024, www.bestcolleges.com/resources/budgeting-in-college/.

"Becoming rich is hard. Staying broke is hard. Choose your hard." -- Eric Worre



The Good **Roommate Checklist**

Everyone likes to come home to a clean space. Here's how to easily conquer cleaning chores with your roommate.



LIVING SPACE

DAILY

- Clean & consider disinfecting frequently-touched surfaces.
- Clean visible messes. Pick up personal items.
- WEEKLY
- Vacuum and/or sweep.
- Dust.

SAFETY 101

- O Don't mix cleaning products.
- ✓ Keep cleaning products in their original containers with labels intact.
- ✓ Read and follow label directions when cleaning and disinfecting.

KITCHEN/KITCHENETTE

DAILY

- Clean & consider disinfecting frequently-touched surfaces. (countertops, refrigerator door, etc.).
- Clean visible messes and crumbs.
- Wash dishes
- Put away food.
- WEEKLY
- Clean out refrigerator and toss any expired or old food.
- Clean inside and outside of microwave.
- Vacuum, sweep and/or mop.



BATHROOM

DAILY

- Clean & consider disinfecting frequently-touched surfaces.
- Clean visible messes.
- Pick up and organize personal items. WEEKLY
- Clean toilet.
- Clean sink and countertop.
- Clean shower/bath.
- Vacuum, sweep and/or mop.
- Wash towels and bathmats.

Keep clutter to a minimum and take advantage of storage where you can, like using under the bed storage. Having lots of stuff around makes cleaning harder and gives dust room to collect. Since dust triggers asthma and allergies, wipe down surfaces like light fixtures, blinds, window frames and baseboards, using a clean cloth and some dusting product.

And here's some tips for cleaning!

Attending Class & Doing the Reading...

or, It's Not Too Early for Midterms

BY AZAYDA LYNT NEWBURY HALL ARM

When most students think of studying, there is this preconceived notion that studying only comes with preparation for an upcoming test, guiz, exam, or other classroom event. The mindset that only putting effort into something for a good outcome can make studying seem like a daunting task. Over the course of my past two semesters here at Western Connecticut State University, I have found that reframing my attitude about homework and studying has in the long term improved my grades simply by remaining positive and open-minded. Here are four of my tips and tricks for improving the study mindset.

1) Visual aids

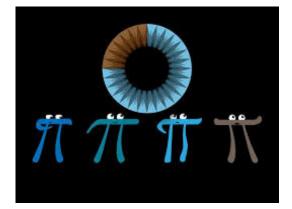
I find myself every day getting sucked into the mindless scrolling that is TikTok, Instagram, and/or YouTube. Have you ever thought about using these platforms to entertain not only your boredom but your curriculum? There are countless YouTube channels that are hosted by real-life professors who may be teaching the same textbook or course material. These are a few resources that I se for studying with visual aids:

- Khan Academy Khan Academy offers free online courses, lessons, and practice in various subjects, including math, science, economics, history, and more. The content is suitable for both high school and college-level students.
- MIT OpenCourseWare MIT's OpenCourseWare (OCW) channel features video lectures and course materials from a wide range of MIT courses, covering subjects like engineering, computer science, mathematics, and the humanities.

- **CrashCourse** created by John and Hank Green, CrashCourse offers engaging and informative video series on subjects like biology, history, literature, and more. The content is designed to be accessible and entertaining while covering material relevant to college courses.
- YaleCourses YaleCourses provides full video lectures from some of Yale University's introductory courses, including subjects like philosophy, history, psychology, and literature.
- **Coursera** Coursera partners with universities and organizations worldwide to offer free online courses, many of which are available on their YouTube channel. Topics range from computer science and data science to humanities and personal development.
- **Stanford University** Stanford's YouTube channel features lectures and presentations from various courses, conferences, and events, covering topics like computer science, engineering, and entrepreneurship.
- Harvard University Harvard's official YouTube channel includes lectures, panels, and educational content from various disciplines, providing insights into both general and specialized topics.
- The Organic Chemistry Tutor This channel is particularly popular among students studying chemistry, math, and physics, offering detailed tutorials and problem-solving strategies that are helpful for college-level courses.
- **3Blue1Brown** This channel focuses on explaining complex mathematical concepts through visually engaging animations. It's particularly helpful for students studying mathematics, computer science, and related fields.
- **Professor Leonard** Professor Leonard's channel offers comprehensive video lectures on subjects like calculus, statistics, and linear algebra, making it a valuable resource for math students.

Using visual aids such as video essays, chapter reviews, and infographic studies are a great way to study while folding laundry, washing dishes, or even getting ready to go out somewhere. I find that with the right channel, my attention is absorbed and fully entertained. Studying with visual aids has become a daily routine at this point, and it doesn't even feel like studying!







2. Audio Aids and Exercise

Similar to visual aids, audio aids are great for those who need to fill their attention span. On a different note, audio aids are extremely helpful to those who exercise regularly or work outside of school. I love to run in the mornings around campus with my headphones on. Having a digestible interval of study time is crucial to absorbing information in the long term. Studies also show that exercising improves cognitive function greatly. Here are some positive effects of exercising in relation to studying:

- Enhances Focus and Concentration -"Exercise boost blood flow to the brain, which can sharpen cognitive abilities like focus and concentration, helping you stay more alert during study sessions." (American Psychological Association)
- Boosts Memory and Learning "Engaging in physical activity triggers the release of brain chemicals essential for memory and learning, such as brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF)" (Hartford Health Publishing.)
- Reduces Stress and Anxiety "Regular exercise effectively lowers stress and anxiety levels, which can othersiwe hinder studying. It encourages the release of endorphins, the body's natural mood enhancers, leaving you feel calmer and less stressed." (CDC)





- Increases Energy Levels "Physical activity can raise your overall energy and decrease fatigue, enabling you to sustain longer study sessions." (CDC)
- Improves Sleep Quality "Consistent exercise contributes to better sleep, which is vital for memory consolidation and optimal cognitive function." (Hartford Health Publishing)
- Lifts Mood "The mood enhancing effects of exercise can make studying and learning more enjoyable by fostering a more positive attitude." (*Ratey, Hagerman*)

And, if you are also a student who commutes to (or between) campuses, while driving or using public transport, audio aids are a great way to pass the time in between trips! During long car rides, it's easy to plug in your phone and play a podcast.

3. Group Studying

Now, I know that when I am in a large social interaction I can sometimes feel intimidated and shy about my academic success. However, studying in groups provides a range of advantages that can enhance both learning and academic performance. It is important to not that everyone has strengths and weaknesses in certain academic fields, and that by sharing these attributes there are countless benefits in drafting our understanding of a topic. These benefits are well-supported by research and educational theories, underscoring the effectiveness of collaborative learning settings.

• Deepens Understanding Through Dialogue -Group study fosters discussion, which can enhance comprehension of complex topics. When students explain concepts to each other, they reinforce their own understanding and identify areas that need further

- clarification. Evidence shows that peer teaching significantly boosts comprehension by allowing students to articulate their thoughts and receive prompt feedback.
- Enhances Retention and Recall Collaborative learning has been proven to improve memory retention. Engaging in discussions and teaching peers requires retrieving and applying information, which strengthens memory connections. Research indicates that studying in groups can lead to better long-term retention of material compared to studying alone.
- Encourages Varied Perspectives Group study exposes students to a range of viewpoints and problem-solving methods. This diversity can lead to a more thorough understanding of the subject matter, as students benefit from their peers' insights and strategies. Social constructivist theory supports this, proposing that learning is enhanced through social interaction and the exchange of ideas.
- Boosts Motivation and Accountability Studying with others can increase motivation and accountability. The presence of peers helps students remain focused and committed to their study objectives. Knowing that others depend on them can drive students to prepare more thoroughly and engage more actively with the material, improving both individual and group performance.
- Alleviates Stress and Anxiety Collaborative study can reduce the stress and anxiety often linked to academic challenges. It offers a support network where students can discuss concerns, seek clarification, and feel less isolated. Research shows that social support within educational contexts can lower anxiety and enhance academic outcomes.

These advantages highlight that studying in groups can be a powerful approach to improving learning outcomes. The blend of peer support, diverse perspectives, and interactive engagement creates a rich environment for academic success. Finding like-minded and goal-oriented individuals is a key part of academic success. I love my study group and I wouldn't be half as motivated if I didn't have others to help hold me accountable!



4. Building a Relationship with Your Professor

Getting to know your professor can really boost your college experience and success. When you have a good relationship, it's easier to ask for help, get advice, and receive useful feedback. Plus, building that connection can lead to mentorship, networking opportunities, and guidance for your future career. Professors who know their students are more likely to offer support and write strong recommendations.

Building a relationship with your professor also makes it much more enjoyable to attend class. When you have a good relationship, the class feels friendlier and more engaging. You're more likely to jump into discussions, ask questions, and share your thoughts. This makes the whole experience more interactive and less intimidating. Plus, when you connect with your professor, their enthusiasm and teaching style can seem more relatable, which makes the class more enjoyable and motivating. Having a friendly vibe with your professor can make you actually look forward to class and create a positive atmosphere for learning. Overall, having a solid relationship with your professor can make your educational journey more rewarding and supportive.

Finding motivation to keep up with studying is hard. All students struggle with their "why" when it comes to school. Consider this for yourself; why are you a student? Do you love learning? Do you want a rewarding career? Do you want to build rapport with other students and professors? In order to achieve greatness, we must all understand our intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, especially when it comes to personalizing studying to improve our quality of learning.

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Room Changes

The period for room changes is now open. If you are interested in changing your room assignment, you must email and/or speak to your RD or the RD of the building you wish to move to.

Because of Pinney Hall's closure for renovations and the increase in the number of students living on campus this year, room changes may not be possible. For the best option, please keep the following in mind:

- 1. The easiest way for a room change to be made at this time is via a room swap, where you and another student looking for a change agree to swap assignments.
- 2. Students who don't wish to move cannot be forced to move. Please don't even try to ask us to make them move, or pressure them to move so you can live with a friend.
- 3. If you find that a room change isn't possible right now, try some simple things to make your situation liveable:
- TALK to your roommate if you have an issue. Most of us can't read minds, so let them know what might be bothering you.
- Make a roommate agreement. Either with just you and your roommate (s), or with the help of your RA, make some agreements with each other about noise, cleanliness, visitors, borrowing, food, sleep and study times - anything that you might have some different needs for. It is really helpful to have the discussion, and you can hold each other accountable when you have reached an agreement.





Yara Zoccarato • an interview

BY VERA BOATEMAA | FAIRFIELD HALL ARM

"One of my favorite things about my job is connecting students to peers and seeing them form friendships."

Hello Ms. Yara, how are you doing? I am doing great. How are you?

am good, thanks for asking. Can I get your full name?

My name is Yara Zoccarato

Can you tell us something about your personal life?

I was born in Brazil. My family moved to Danbury, CT when I was 6. I have a younger brother and a younger sister. I graduated from UCONN with a bachelor's in political science and Latin American Studies. I then pursued a master's degree in educational psychology at WCSU and graduated in 2021.

What are the things you do for fun?

I enjoy hiking, kayaking, and horseback riding. I also take boxing classes for fun and to release stress. **When did you start working at WESTCONN?** I started in my current position as of Fall 2019. **What is your job description at WESTCONN?** Our department is the Pre-Collegiate and Access Programs Department. We have 5 different programs.

We work with middle school and high school students from the Danbury school district. Our Pre-Collegiate programs work with students who are the first in their families to attend college and come from a low-income background. Our department guides them through the college preparation and application process. At the college level we have two programs. The Educational Achievement and Access Bridge Program (EAP), which is a program to support first year full time students in their transition to college. In addition, we also house the Promoting Academically Successful Students (PASS) program, which is a program aimed at supporting students to redress their academic standing through a peer mentoring model.

What are remarkable things about your job?

I get to work with students from various backgrounds with different life experiences and help them apply foundational academic skills to their college experience to help them meet their educational goals. One of my favorite things about my job is connecting students to peers and seeing them form friendships. I see students go from complete strangers to friends. Another thing I really enjoy about my job is seeing students succeed. I enjoy witnessing a student become excited about using a planner, or having a student show me their to-do list for the week.

What are some of the challenges you are facing? Mmmmm... this is a tricky question because I feel as if there is a lot going on. One thing I would like to see more from students is communication. Let us talk about how your semester is going. I would like for students to share their struggles and accomplishments more often so that we as professionals can get to better know their strengths and areas for improvement. We can learn a lot from each other from simply communicating a little more.

What are upcoming programs you want to share?

Our department is hosting our PASS Mentor training on Saturday, Sept 14 for over 45 PASS Mentors who will be collaborating with us this semester!

Wednesday, September 25, our department is hosting our Waffle Wednesday from 9:30am – 11:00. Stop by in front of Warner to grab a plate of waffles! We serve them until 11:00 am or until waffles run out!

What is some advice you will give to WESTCONN students?

College is supposed to be challenging. You are supposed to feel out of your comfort zone. Be sure to connect with your professors and staff. Everyone is here to help you, but you must be the one to reach out and ask questions.

Thank you for talking to us today.

You are welcome.

Find out more about the Pre-Collegiate and Access Programs here: <u>https://www.wcsu.edu/pcaap/</u>

