College students are regularly encouraged to begin “networking” at an early stage of their academic careers. As a young TRiO student, I remembered having negative reactions to advice about networking. I did not like the idea of showing up at large gatherings, and getting to know a person solely because he or she might be able to “help me out” in the future. I did not want to make small talk with virtual strangers in the hopes of exchanging our business cards for future connections. The interactions felt “fake” so I tended to want to hang out with people I already knew. However, I have come to realize that the concept of networking is more meaningful than owning a large Rolodex filled with “connected” people.

Networks can go beyond having the contact information for prominent people. We start our lives building on our social network through our families and clans. We develop deep, mutually beneficial relationships of the kind that have kept humanity plugging along for generations. Through schooling, work, religious organizations, and volunteering, we begin to meet people that we admire and often this is the start of another new meaningful relationship. Building your social network may start with spending more interactive time in these kinds of settings where your friends and family already gather.

Still not convinced? Well, researchers have shown that people particularly need a social network when they are job hunting. Interestingly enough, most people get their jobs through acquaintances, and not friends or family. Why? Well, if you think about it, many of the people who are closest to you have exposure to the same kinds of opportunities that you do. Often, it is a friend of a friend who provides a lead on a great new job. Mark Granovetter first wrote about the “strength of weak ties” in 1973.

Let me provide an example of the kinds of dilemmas people get into if they don’t have an extensive social network. “Veronica” is from a low-income, single parent family. She went to Eastern Michigan University, a public, 4-year institution similar to Metropolitan State University. She was a good student, but she did not interact with professors very much. She had one Spanish professor who enjoyed talking to her about her future career ideas. “Veronica” also worked in a part-time job at a research center typing in data. She got to know a very prominent and highly regarded researcher. Just as Veronica started looking for a job, she realized that her Spanish professor had relocated back to Spain, and he was virtually impossible to find. Then, sadly, the prominent professor she knew from her previous employment died of cancer. “Veronica” found that most jobs ask for five references, and she had lost her two best recommendations.

There are many opportunities to meet people who might otherwise be unknown to you. TRiO offers numerous events where students can mingle and get to know one another. Creating a large circle of friends from different backgrounds raises the chances that you will meet people and become connected with people who have access to information and resources you may never have otherwise encountered. From computer science, there is Metcalfe’s law: the value of a network increases with the square of its membership count.

Today’s college student has the chance to meet people from around the nation and even the world; people from radically different backgrounds can become mutual supports to one another. The friend you get to know from Ghana may become your host on a trip overseas you never imagined was possible.

Sources:
TRIO students are naturally very diverse with regard to their computer skills. Some students are majoring in computer-related careers, while others are striving to get through their bachelor’s degree with as little contact with computers as possible. Whether you like computers or not, it is likely to be important for your future career to keep up with what is going on in the technological sphere. You may have heard reference to the “digital divide” between those who have access to technology and those who do not. Those who have less access and fewer skills in using the Internet tend to be poor people, people with disabilities, and people in rural areas. TRIO wants to help students and their families become aware of the importance of access to technology. Noted journalist Bill Moyers from PBS wrote about the power of the developing Internet:

"the Internet as the type of revolution that has come along only two or three times in all of human existence. [Many] equate the digital revolution with major historical shifts like the industrial revolution, which changed nearly every aspect of life-including political systems, economic power, gender roles, and where and how we live."

Even if you are already an Internet genius, there may some insights to be found in this article. The following are some of the tools technologically-savvy college students are using, please read on.

The first “draft” of the World Wide Web is seen by some as an endless collection of websites, providing information ranging from useless to vital in a relatively disorganized manner. Now, a “second” draft or second generation to the Internet is being called Web 2.0. Web 2.0 refers to interactive communities on the web that collaborate to share information among users. There are presently several “social networking” sites focused on sharing news, bookmarks, class notes, and websites that operate on the principles of Web 2.0 including, but not limited to:

1) digg.com (a social news sharing site),
2) reddit.com,
3) delicious.com (a social bookmarking site),
4) myspace.com,
5) clipmarks.com,
6) stumbleupon.com.

Essentially, these websites work by signing up members who rank and review information ranging from news stories to every imaginable type of website. This process allows worthwhile websites to gain more readers, while less useful websites are “weeded out.” Next, each member connects with other members based on a personal connection, shared interests, or just curiosity.

At the TRIO office, we have elected to have an account for all TRIO students with delicious.com. We have created an account with the username: metrotrio for use by our TRIO participants. In this account, we have saved numerous bookmarks for helpful websites related to college education. For example, one website helps college students improve their writing (http://nutsandbolts.washcoll.edu/process.htm).

More information about signing up for this service will be available from the “Technology Tip” section at the end of this newsletter.
Workshops this Summer

The TRiO Student Support Services and the Power of You are teaming up to present some workshops this summer.

The workshops are being presented in conjunction with the Power of Your program. Current TRiO students are invited to attend.

They will (tentatively) be held the weeks of July 9th - Aug 20th. The workshops include: TRiO/Academic Lingo, Intro to Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel & PowerPoint), What is a Syllabus? How do I Use It to Plan my Semester?, Ace Those Tests, Critical Thinking Tools your Professor Will Grade, and Learning Styles and Identifying the Tools to Maximize Yours.

We will provide you more information as details on times and locations are firmed up.

New Groups for TRiO Students

This fall, TRiO will be offering two new activities. First, we are offering an employment-focused group, called the “Career Search team,” where students seeking jobs will get a chance to draft and exchange resumes and cover letters, practice interviewing, and assist one another with locating good job leads.

Nowadays, many work sites will have a panel of people interviewing job candidates, and many job candidates find this type of interview intimidating. This group seeks to help everyone develop some comfort with answering interview questions confidently.

Did you know that nearly every employee at Metropolitan State University had to give a public presentation—open to any interested party—before they were hired to work here? We are starting a speech team to help TRiO students enhance their public speaking skills for the improvement of class presentation assignments and presentation that must be given during one’s career. The purpose of the speaking group is to provide a supportive environment for TRiO participants to practice making short speeches, including encouraging those students who are anxious about public speaking. We will also review tips for using PowerPoint as a tool for giving presentations.

AA - Affirmative Action
AACSB - American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business
AASCU - American Association of State Colleges and Universities
AAUW - American Association of University Women
ACE - American Council of Education
ACF - Average Cost Funding
ACT - American College Testing
AFSCME - American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
AQIP - Academic Quality Improvement Program

B.A. - Bachelor of Arts
BAS - Bachelor of Applied Science
BMS - Budget Management System
B.S. - Bachelor of Science
B.S.N. - Bachelor of Science in Nursing
B.S.W. - Bachelor of Social Work
CAEL - Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
CAS - College of Arts and Sciences
CASE - Council for Advancement and Support of Education
CCBL - Center for Community-Based Learning
CELA - Center for Experiential Learning

affect / effect

Effect is usually a noun that means a result or the power to produce a result: “The sound of the falling rain had a calming effect, nearly putting me to sleep.” Affect is usually a verb that means to have an influence on: “His loud humming was affecting my ability to concentrate.” Note that effect can also be a verb meaning to bring about or execute: “The speaker's somber tone effected a dampening in the general mood of the audience.”
Get with the Network, The Del.icio.us Network

The earlier article written by our TRiO/SSS Counselor, Deborah Foster, expressed the importance of social networking and how it can help students. Social Networking sites allow students or its users to share information with others. One example of a social networking website is the popular MySpace.com, which let users post their profiles online for others to see and comment on. It is basically a virtual community.

Del.icio.us or simply Delicious.com is also a social networking site. It’s main purpose is to allow its user to store or bookmark websites that are of importance to them. This is the perfect site for storing information that students may find useful. Deborah has been working hard, bookmaking websites that relate to TRiO and other informational websites that may provide important information for students. To see the TRiO Delicious account that Deborah has been working on, type in the address www.delicious.com/metrotrio into your internet browser.

To register for an account of your own, click on “register” located above the search button. You only need to provide them with a username and an email address to verify your account. With an account, you can keep all of your bookmarks in ONE central location, to share them with your friends and family or for just checking to see recent and/or popular headlines among the community.

We hope the article and these tips have been informational for you. There are many other social networking websites out there so feel free to look around and see what else is available. We strongly encourage students to email us at triocenter@metrostate.edu with website addresses that you think should be included here or sites that have been helpful to you or your friends. Thank you for reading.