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Who We Are

The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) is a federally funded TRIO grant program sponsored by the University of Northern Iowa. We are located in the UNI-CUE building on Sycamore Street, downtown Waterloo. We work with individuals and their families to overcome any barriers they may be facing in order to achieve educational goals they have set for themselves. We are able to assist individuals typically 19 years of age or older who do not have a 4-year degree and live in Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, or Tama counties. We can serve some high school seniors if they cannot be appropriately served by a Talent Search Program.

At our office we offer career counseling, assistance with the completion of college applications and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). We also offer basic financial planning, scholarship search assistance, help resolving student loan defaults, referrals to the High School Completion Program and HiSET (formerly the GED program).

Our goal is to increase the number of adult participants who enroll into a postsecondary program.

We look forward to serving many more individuals in the upcoming year. If you are interested, or know someone who would like assistance, please give us a call today at 319-433-1230 to make an appointment with one of our knowledgeable counselors.

“Who We Are—EOC Overview”

The History of TRIO

In 1965, Congress began creating a series of programs to help Americans overcome class and social barriers to higher education. These services geared towards low-income and first generation students were called Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds. Today they are called the Federal TRIO programs. “TRIO” derived from the first three programs established.

Upward Bound—1964: Prepares high school students for success in postsecondary education.


Student Support Services—1968: Helps low-income, first generation college students graduate from college.

Veterans Upward Bound—1972: Provides support services to enable veterans to transition into college.


Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs—1976: Helps increase the effectiveness of TRIO programs through staff training and development.


Upward Bound Math/Science—1990: Prepares high school students for college math and science programs.

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

—C.S. Lewis
You filled out your FAFSA® and submitted it. What happens next?
Applying isn’t the last step; your FAFSA has to be processed, and then you get an Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which your college or career school uses to figure out how much aid you can get.

Where does my FAFSA information go once I submit it?
Your FAFSA information is shared with the colleges and/or career schools you list on the application. The financial aid office at a school uses your information to figure out how much federal student aid you may receive at that school. If the school has its own funds to use for financial aid, it might use your FAFSA information to determine your eligibility for that aid as well. (The school might also have other forms it wants you to fill out to get school aid, so check with the financial aid office to be sure.)

Your information also goes to your state higher education agency, as well as to agencies of the states where your chosen schools are located. Many states have financial aid funds that they give out based on FAFSA information.

So, your FAFSA helps you apply for federal, state, and school financial aid.

How can I check to see whether my FAFSA has been processed?
You can check the status of your FAFSA immediately after submitting it online. You can check the status of a paper FAFSA after it has been processed (roughly 7–10 days from the date mailed). Here’s how:

Option 1: Go to www.fafsa.gov and log in.
Option 2: Contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center.

If your FAFSA is still being processed, we recommend that you wait a few days before checking the status again.

Who will I hear from, and when?
First, the office of Federal Student Aid at the U.S. Department of Education will send you a Student Aid Report (SAR), which is a summary of the FAFSA data you submitted. You’ll get your SAR within three days to three weeks after you submit your FAFSA. Be sure to look over your SAR to make sure you didn’t make a mistake on your FAFSA. Find out more about the Student Aid Report, its purpose, how the type of FAFSA you file determines when you’ll get the SAR, and what you should do with it.

The SAR won’t tell you how much financial aid you’ll get. Instead, if you applied for admission to a college or career school and have been accepted, and you listed that school on your FAFSA, the school will calculate your aid and will send you an electronic or paper aid offer, sometimes called an award letter, telling you how much aid you’re eligible for at the school. The timing of the aid offer varies from school to school and could be as early as springtime (awarding for the fall) or as late as immediately before you start school. It depends on when you apply and how the school prefers to schedule awarding of aid.

What if I made a mistake on my FAFSA? How do I correct it?
Once your application has been processed, you can correct your FAFSA online or on paper. (Making corrections online is the easiest and fastest option.)

How do I decide what aid to accept, and how do I accept it?
You’ll need to understand the aid that’s being offered (for instance, is it free money such as a grant, or is it a loan that you’ll have to pay back?), decide what aid you really need, and then respond to the school’s award letter within the deadline set by the school.

How do I get my money?
The financial aid staff at your college or career school will explain exactly how and when your aid will be paid out. They also will tell you whether you need to fill out any more paperwork or meet other requirements. For instance, if you’re receiving a federal student loan for the first time, you should expect to be required to sign a promissory note and go through entrance counseling. Be sure to keep in touch with your school’s financial aid office so that you understand the whole process of receiving your aid.

—Submitted by Lovely Henderson  Source: https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/next-steps

Meet Yvonne Lampson

The Educational Opportunity Center welcomes Yvonne Lampson to our staff as our program Secretary. Yvonne is originally from Cedar Falls, and obtained an Associate’s Degree in Business Management from Hawkeye Community College.

Upon graduating from Hawkeye Community College, Yvonne worked for Wheaton Franciscan Health Care.

Yvonne has two children: Adrik, 18 years old and Ian, 12 years old. Between caring for them, Yvonne enjoys watching movies, reading, fishing, and traveling. She has thoroughly enjoyed residing in the Cedar Valley, but would love to someday retire in a sunny and warm climate.

Yvonne’s enjoys working with the counselors and clients at the UNI-CUE most.

—Submitted by Monica Bass
Deterius Kimbrough

Deterius has been a participant at the EOC since 2011 and is a current student at UNI, but his educational path has not been a path easily traveled. Deterius’ father was sent to prison when Deterius was only three; his mother left him with his grandmother who raised him. Growing up, Deterius did not have the clothing and shoes he needed for football and camp, but he noticed that the drug dealers had things they needed, so he started dealing in the 7th grade. A fond memory of his childhood was going to football camp where he did not need to sell drugs or worry about surviving, he got to just be a kid.

When Deterius was a junior at West High School, he lost sight of his goals—football, college, and the military; he was caught selling drugs, and was charged as an adult. Deterius was sent to prison on a 34 year sentence, but while he was incarcerated he was offered the chance to get his GED from Iowa Central Community College. By getting his GED, he was then offered a free business class in prison from ICC College. Deterius spent over five years in prison, but by the time he was released he had gained confidence in his educational ability, and when he was introduced to EOC counselor Constance McGovern at Tyson Foods, he was ready to move forward. He originally wanted to go into a CNC program but Constance investigated deeper and asked him questions about his interests. She encouraged him to go into something that enthused him and interested him. Deterius states, “You (Constance) saw something in me, and now I am at UNI going on to help others”.

Deterius has one child, Zaterius, a one-year old boy. He enjoys volunteering with youth at Quakerdale, and has enjoyed working for Social Action, Inc. and the Bakari Project in the past. He accredits David Goodson, Sherman Wise, Michael Muhammad, Quentin Hart, and Marvin Spencer for being mentors and helping him along the way. When asked what advice he would give others considering going back to school, he stated, “never give up, even when society won’t open up the door for you, never give up.”

—Submitted by Constance McGovern

College Spotlight: Hawkeye Community College

Connecting to ...
- 50+ high demand career and transfer programs
- Small classes taught by instructors with real-world experience
- Success services, including TRiO, career services, counseling, and more
- Professional clubs and organizations to gain experience and leadership
- Student activities and intercollegiate/intramural sports to get involved and make new friends

For more information:
319-296-4000
www.hawkeye.edu