Welcome Pack Thank You

The Seita Scholars Program welcomed 44 new Seita Scholars! This group is the 7th cohort of students to enter Western Michigan University with the support of the program.

With all of your assistance, we were able to provide full packs of items to supply the residence hall rooms of these incoming students. We were also able to provide them with start-up school supplies, homemade quilts, sewing kits, snacks and volunteer support to move into their rooms.

Not including handmade items that students can choose from, each welcome pack is estimated to cost around $275 to put together (including only store bought items). However, the value of each welcome pack is far more than just monetary.

Year after year, the Seita Scholars express how much this welcome means to them—past students have called it “Christmas in August” and identified that “they are very helpful” in starting off the academic year on the right foot.

From all of the Seita Scholars, both new and returning students, we would like to extend a very sincere thank you to each individual and group who made this year’s welcome pack initiative a resounding success.

Thank you!

Seeking Career Mentors

In addition to welcoming the new cohort of Seita Scholars with welcome packs, it is the goal of the Seita Scholars Program to assist these Scholars in expanding their support network here on campus by matching many of our new students with a Volunteer Career Mentor—and we need your help!

Volunteer Career Mentors have the opportunity to connect one-on-one with a current Seita Scholar (or two) and work with them to develop and hone their professional and academic skills.

Program Requirements

Career Mentors must be at least 25 years of age and have a baccalaureate degree. In addition, they must agree to complete an application and criminal background check, participate in an orientation session, commit to mentor his/her mentee for at least one academic year and spend four hours per month with his/her mentee, at least half of which should be face to face

Apply Now

Applications to be a Volunteer Career Mentor are available online at:

http://wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess/seita/volunteering/mentor

Questions

For questions about the Volunteer Career Mentor service contact Mike Peno via email at michael.s.peno@wmich.edu or via phone at (269) 387-8357.
Kicking off the 2014-15 Academic Year: Staffing Changes

September marks the 7th fall semester that the Seita Scholars Program has welcomed new students to the campus of Western Michigan University! This year, the program is pleased to welcome a cohort of 44 new students!

As we begin the new academic year, we want to take a moment and update our volunteers, mentors and community partners about some changes that have taken place over the summer months. As our program continues to grow and change, we are pleased to add new faces to the support staff who help make the program run. We hope you will join us in welcoming our new staff this year!

Staff Changes: Campus Coaches

Over the summer, the Seita Scholars Program welcomed two new campus coaches, Peter Thompson and Korrine Wojcik.

Peter graduated from Kalamazoo Loy Norrix High School. After a year at Macalester College in St. Paul, MN, where he played football, Peter transferred to the University of Michigan and completed his Bachelor’s Degree in English Language and Literature. He later attended Bowling Green State University (OH) where he earned a Master’s degree in College Student Personnel.

Peter also has a Master’s in English Education and has taught first year composition, developmental composition, and the First Year Experience Seminar, in addition to serving as a consultant in the WMU Writing Center.

Korrine received her Bachelors degree in Psychology and her Masters of Social Work from Western Michigan University.

Professionally, her past experiences have focused around training and educating youth and young adults on social, emotional, and life skills. She is passionate about working alongside young adults to assist them in reaching their personal and professional goals.

Staff Changes: Graduate Assistants

This year, we welcome two new graduate assistants to the program: Kali Fuller and Michael Peno.

Kali is a recent WMU graduate, who is currently working towards her Masters of Science in Accountancy at the Haworth College of Business. Kali is an active volunteer for the SPCA of Kalamazoo, while also dedicating her time to other events within the Kalamazoo community.

Michael completed has undergraduate degree in Psychology at Mitchell College and is currently studying Educational Leadership, Higher Education and Student Affairs at WMU.

Through his work at the Jim Casey Initiative, which he began in 2011, Michael discovered his passion for working to improve the pipeline to college graduation for students who experienced foster care.

Welcome to the team!

Update your bookmarks, as our website has changed:
http://wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess/seita
Looking Ahead: Winter Celebrations

The Seita Scholars Program is looking ahead already to the winter months, the closure of the University during this time, and holiday celebrations. For the third consecutive year, we are preparing to host a White Elephant gift exchange for Seita Scholars, which will take place in the midst of the winter holidays.

This event, which started with less than fifteen students attending, has become a highly anticipated event each year. This year, we expect around fifty students to take part and are asking for assistance with purchasing gifts to provide for the event.

As shared in the past, items that are particularly popular for this event include:

- Gift cards (Amazon, Meijer, Visa, gas cards, etc.)
- Pots/Pans/Dishes
- Electronics (speaker chair, headphones, etc.)
- Crock pot
- Swiffer mops

Gifts usually total about $50, and generally do not include items that students already received in their welcome packs in August. For a complete list of items in the welcome packs, please visit http://wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess/seita/volunteering/welcamepack

For information on donating email seita-scholars@wmich.edu

Donor’s Corner

Throughout the year, the Seita Scholars Program seeks donations of the following items to supply Seita Scholars:

- Non-perishable single-serve snacks
- Personal care items (deodorant, shampoo, conditioner)
- Laundry detergent

Also, as the winter months arrive donations of gift cards to purchase winter items, or new gloves, hats, scarves, and winter coats are always appreciated. Donation drop-offs can be arranged by emailing seita-scholars@wmich.edu or calling our main office at (269) 387-8362.

To make a monetary donation to the program, please visit http://wmich.edu/fosteringsuccess/donate.

Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming Events for Mentors and Mentees

Each school year, the Seita Scholars Program works to plan events to bring mentors and their mentees together. As everyone’s calendar fills up quickly, we are hoping to release dates earlier to accommodate the busyness of people’s lives—so mark your calendars for these upcoming events!

Mentor and Mentee Bowling

The kick-off event of the academic year will be a mentor and mentee bowling event with a twist! This year, we are inviting mentors and their mentees, but also encouraging mentors who are not paired yet to join us at the event, as we will also be inviting students who have not been paired.

For those individuals who have been paired, we encourage you to reach out to your mentee and ensure that he or she is able to attend prior to RSVPing.

This event will be a great way to connect with other matched pairs, and potentially find a match for the academic year!

The event will take place from 1—3PM at Pinz Bowling Alley on Sunday, October 12.

Movie Night at the Alamo

It will not be night, but there will be a movie! All mentors and their mentees are invited to attend a special screening of a film (to be determined) at the Alamo Drafthouse on Sunday, November 9 from 1—3PM.

This event is designed for mentors who are already matched with students, and we encourage you to reach out to your mentee ahead of time to ensure that he or she is able to attend.

After the event, based on previous feedback, we will encourage people to gather in the lobby for an informal meet and greet.

Food will be served at both of these events! For both of these vents, mentors can RSVP by responding to the invitation they received via email. For questions, please email Michael Peno at michael.s.peno@wmich.edu.

We hope that many of our mentors and students will be able to make these events! Look out for dates for our upcoming spring soon!
Important Dates

September 2014
- September 1: Labor Day Holiday
- September 2: Fall semester begins (8AM)
- September 7: President’s Pool Party and Barbecue
- September 10: President’s Welcome*
- September 22: New mentor training*
- September 25: Fostering Futures Benefit

October 2014
- October 12: Mentor/Mentee Bowling at Pinz*
- October 15: Seita Scholars Town Hall Meeting
- October 31: Halloween

November 2014
- November 3: Last day to withdraw from classes
- November 6: Fostering Success Michigan Regional Network Meeting*
- November 9: Mentor/Mentee Film Event at Alamo*
- November 26 (noon) - November 30: Thanksgiving Break

December 2014
- December 7: Finals Week Celebration
- December 8-December 12: Final Exam Week
- December 13: Commencement
- December 16: Final grades posted
- December 19: Seita Scholars White Elephant Gift Exchange event
- December 25: Christmas Holiday (WMU Closed)
- December 26-December 31: WMU Winter Closure (WMU closed)
- January 1: New Years Day Holiday (WMU Closed)

*Indicate events mentors are encouraged to attend!