Sharon Gritzmacher Retires after 20 Years

We all need guidance in our lives, especially while we’re in college. Sharon Gritzmacher, an advisor and professor, has provided students with expert guidance, professional mentoring, and a compassionate ear at Bemidji State for the past twenty years. “When a student has a problem, Sharon looks at the bigger picture, not only to just fix the problem, but to prevent it from happening again,” says Sarah Young, an advisor who has worked with Sharon for the past fourteen years.

“In 1984, I began teaching in the public school system. I worked with K-12 students, and also with adults who had severe mental disabilities,” says Sharon, whose official title is Learning Skills Specialist. “In 1992, there was a position available at Bemidji State, and it was just calling for me.”

Sharon began her college endeavor at the University of Missouri - Columbia, “where I flunked out. At that time, there was no student support system. Ten years later, I received my AA from Indian Hills Community College in Centerville, Iowa, which gave me the confidence to get it together. From there, I returned to Columbia to get my undergrad and graduate degrees.”

A major factor in her becoming a Learning Skills Specialist was her desire to express to students what she has lived and learned. “My experience was gained on my own; there were no mentors then. Based on what I’ve learned, I recognize the various reasons why students drop out, and I also recognize the characteristics that lead to success.”

While there are many, the most fulfilling aspect of her job is watching her students transform into professional adults. “My motivation is to make as big of a difference in a positive way with students who are at a disadvantage. These are students who come to college not ready and not knowing how to become ready, and I give them the information so that they can put school in place, and be at a point to be here in college and to navigate their experiences. Life is a lot easier that way.”

It’s not all just academic for Sharon. She has had a very active presence in the lives of many basketball players. As part of the Underrepresented Student’s Initiative, a MnSCU program developed to help students adjust to college, Sharon’s role has been to help students from places like Miami transition to Bemidji. She is affectionately thought of by many as the team mom, being both caring and stern, and forging relationships.

“She has been a great help to our program,” says head basketball coach Matt Bowen. “Sharon is what every professor and advisor should aspire to be, and who is a direct and determined advocate for the students’ welfare, both academically and socially.”

Sharon also has a vested interest in China and Chinese culture. “After a lifelong fascination, I was finally able to go to China in 1997, and when I got there, it felt like home. I went to China each year from ’97 to 2008, and I still read about the country and the culture.”

Though she speaks little Chinese, “I have a good accent, and when native speakers hear that, they’ll start talking to me with the mindset that I’m fluent, and I’ll be lucky if I can pick out one or two words,” she says with a laugh.

As for retirement, Sharon and her husband plan on spending winters in Cape Coral, Florida, where they have a two-bedroom condo. “It’s not so much a new chapter in my life as it is a whole new book. I’m looking forward to new plans, but also keeping some things the way they are; I’ll still be reading and doing laundry regularly, but retirement will present itself as an opportunity to reinvent myself and to be opened to new experiences.”

“The great jazz musician Miles Davis once said ‘Do not fear mistakes—there are none,’” she says. Learning doesn’t stop once school is over, and Sharon’s teachings, effects, and influences over the last twenty years will be remembered by all for a long time to come.
No matter if you are having a great spring semester or if it is leaving something to be desired, you have the opportunity to make it better. Life is truly a progression, and because no one is perfect, I would encourage you to examine not only your academic life, but perhaps your personal life and apply 5 quick personal tips as outlined below.

**Plan!** This semester is happening whether you want it to or not, so make sure you stay on top of the game. Make sure you are working with your advisors not only for how this semester is going, but for what the future semesters hold. If you don’t utilize a calendar, I recommend that you start right away. List those key assignments and dates and create a plan for success!

**Let Go!** We all have things in our life that we know we either could, or should do without. Whether it’s a habit, object, or even a person, sometimes letting go is best.

**Don’t Make Excuses!** Things happen that none of us can predict or control; I get that! Just don’t dwell on it. It’s very cliché I know, but when life gives you lemons you have to learn how to make lemonade.

**Take Care of Yourself!** This is one that I have to work on as well. Whatever you do, don’t forget that you are your star player! Plan some time to do things that are important to you. If you enjoy coffee, build in a Java City break every now and then. When you feel yourself getting sick, take some medicine and see a doctor! When you aren’t well it not only affects you and your grades but it also affects those around you.

**Celebrate Successes Both Big and Small!** You work hard to keep it all together; why not celebrate each victory? There are some people in this world that don’t want you to succeed and be successful. This is why it is essential that you celebrate yourself! If you earn an “A” on a big project, take some time to feel a sense of pride. Don’t get the “big head” though; there is sure to be another mountain to climb!

This in no way is an all-inclusive list of how to live life. This is simply some tips that might help you get through the semester! As always, if you need me, my door is always open. Best wishes for your semester.

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“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

—Mark Twain
**Tips to Stay Healthy During Finals**

Stress is a huge part of the college experience. We don’t, however, have to let it get the best of us. Here’s some easy tips to stay healthy and happy during finals.

1. **Avoid stressful people.**
   Stress actually is contagious. Being around friends or classmates who are stressed out with only add to your stress.

2. **Eat healthy and exercise.**
   Skip the sugar, which will make you crash, and go for snacks like granola bars or fruits and veggies to keep your blood sugar stable. Also, try to get some form of exercise. Even a 10 minute walk will leave you calmer and more focused.

3. **Just say NO.**
   There will probably be a friend who wants to hang out, or a party the night before your final, and if you say yes, you’ll probably be tempted to blow off studying. Resist the urge. Say no to the distractions and be selfish for a day.

4. **Take breaks.**
   For every hour or so that you work, take a 10 or 15 minute break. Let yourself do whatever you want for those 10-15 minutes, and then start working again. This gives your brain a little rest and will help keep you more focused when you are actually doing work.

5. **If you’ve studied all you can, get up your confidence!**
   When test-time rolls around, it’s time to get yourself into confidence mode. You’ve prepared as much as you could, and now it’s time to ace the test.

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**College 101: How to Email Your Professor**

In the age of technology, email has become a familiar medium for students to contact professors. While convenient, errors in student emails have even the most laidback professors grinding their teeth. Here are some pointers on how to send a proper email to your professor.

**Write from your college or university e-mail account.** That immediately lets your professor see that your e-mail is legitimate and not spam. In addition, sending an email from cutey_pie101@hotmail.com gives the impression that you’re not serious about your education.

**Be polite.** "Could you e-mail me the page numbers for the next reading? Thanks!" is a lot better than "I need the assignment."

**Use proper grammar and punctuation.** It is a professor’s nightmare to read an email that says, “will u b in ur office 2moro?” Don’t use txtspk, use the English language in the way it was meant to be used. Also, avoid using excessive punctuation like the dreaded “!!!” or TALKING LIKE THIS BECAUSE YOUR CAPS LOCK WAS ON.

**Proofread what you’ve written.** You want your e-mail to show you in the best possible light.

**Include the course number in your subject line.** "Question about 3009 assignment" is clear and sounds genuine, while "a question" looks like spam. "Question about English assignment" or "question about assignment," without identifying the class you’re in, may leave your professor with the chore of figuring that out. For someone teaching large lecture classes, that might mean reading through hundreds of names on rosters.

**Sign with your full name, course number, and meeting time.**
   John Doe
   English 3703, MWF 10:00
   Signing is an obvious courtesy, and it eliminates the need for a sentence identifying yourself (For example, “My name is John Doe and I am a student in your such-and-such class”).

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For more tips on how to email a professor, supervisor, or for just general emailing etiquette, check out this website: [http://science.kennesaw.edu/~hmattord/email.htm](http://science.kennesaw.edu/~hmattord/email.htm)
Seven Suggestions for Effectively Managing Your Time
Learning how to effectively manage your time gives you the opportunity to have control over your life, leading to a healthier, happier, less-stressed you!

1. **Be Organized**
Use time saving tools: appointment calendars, "to do" lists, e-mail, answering machines, file folders, etc. Have an organized workplace (don't waste time constantly looking for your work). Use your appointment calendar for everything, including listing study time.

2. **Plan Ahead**
Determine how long your tasks will take (do this before agreeing to take on a task!) Consider whether any activities can be combined. Determine if big tasks can be broken down into smaller tasks that may be easier to schedule.

3. **Prioritize Your Tasks**
Set goals for both the short term and long term as to what you want to accomplish. Look at all of your "to do"s to gauge the time requirement and whether additional resources will be needed to accomplish them (if yes, schedule time to obtain those resources). Don't postpone the small tasks (a sense of accomplishment is good and overlooked small tasks can become larger tasks.)

4. **Avoid Overload**
Include time for rest, relaxation, sleep, eating, exercise, and socializing in your schedule. Take short breaks during study and work periods. Don't put everything off until the last minute (for example, don't cram for exams).

5. **Practice Effective Study Techniques**
Have an appropriate study environment. Split large tasks into more manageable tasks. Read for comprehension, rather than just to get to the end of the chapter. Do the most difficult work first, perhaps breaking it up with some easier tasks. Read the syllabus as soon as you get it and note all due dates (and "milestone” times) on your calendar.

6. **Be Able to be Flexible**
The unexpected happens (sickness, car troubles, etc.); you need to be able to fit it into your schedule. Know how to rearrange your schedule when necessary (so it doesn't manage you - you manage it).

7. **Have a Vision**
Don't forget the "big picture" - why are you doing the task - is it important to your long-term personal goals? Know what is important to you. (What do you value most?) Have a positive attitude!

("Much may be done in those little shreds and patches of time which every day produces, and which most men throw away.
—Charles Caleb Colton")
We graduates, alumni invite you associations. Come with you.

Whether you are a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior taking either introductory or advanced courses, TRiO participants are eligible for tutoring services for their entire undergraduate career at BSU. If you were in TRiO as a freshman, you are still a TRiO participant and can get a tutor through our office.

It’s Not Too Late to Get Help
Come to the TRiO/SSS office and fill out a Request for Tutoring form at the TRiO/SSS Tutoring Services table. Then talk to Linda in Sanford 04 about your tutoring needs, and we will find the right tutor for you.

For more information
Contact Linda at 755-2222
or e-mail: lwolf@bemidjistate.edu

TRiO Seniors: Stay Connected to TRiO after Graduation
We invite you to stay connected to TRiO after graduating from BSU by registering with several different TRiO alumni associations. By registering you will be able to share TRiO experiences, to network with other TRiO graduates, and to help fight for college opportunity for low income, first generation and/or disabled students.

TRiO Minnesota
Register with TRiO Minnesota to receive TRiO updates and information and to learn about future opportunities for TRiO Alumni. To register go to http://www.mntrio.org/ and click on For Alumni.

MAEOPP TRiO Alumni Network
The Mid-America Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MAEOPP) is excited to work with TRiO alumni: to assist them in connecting with fellow TRiO alumni and staff, to keep alumni up-to-date about upcoming TRiO events, TRiO legislative issues, volunteer opportunities, and more! To join go to http://www.maeopp.org/Alumni.html

National TRIO Alumni Association (NTAA)
The mission of the National TRIO Alumni Association is to promote the critical value of the TRIO program by
1. Providing career and networking opportunities for graduates of TRIO programs
2. Mobilizing Alumni so that their talents and success can encourage others through mentoring
3. Providing career information and other supports available to low-income, first-generation and disabled students particularly those currently enrolled in TRIO programs
4. Advocating for increased public support of the expansion of college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students and those with disabilities within the United States. To register go to https://www.trioalumni.us
**TRiO Alumni Spotlight: Brett Bahr**

Former BSU TRiO student and current Admissions Representative at BSU, Brett Bahr, sat down to share his story about his experience as a BSU TRiO student and how it helped him get to where he is today.

**How did you first become involved in TRiO?** I first became involved in the TRIO program because I qualified as a first generation student as neither of my parents attended a college or university.

**What was your first impression of TRiO?** To be honest, my first impression of TRiO was that most students were part of the program. I came to find out later that it was a unique program that set students like me up for success.

**What’s your first memory of TRIO?** My first memory of TRIO was meeting my advisor, Phil Dahl (now retired). The relationship between Phil and me was strong from day one. We each shared a passion for the outdoors and an understanding of each other’s views.

**How did your involvement with TRIO impact your success as a student?** My academic success can be somewhat contributed to TRIO. During my college years, I like to say that I was self-motivated and accomplished my goals on my own, but having support from departments such as TRIO helped me stay on task.

**How did your success as a student impact where you are now?** My success in school as well as “getting plugged in,” on campus and in the community has definitely helped me get to where I am today. Without the experiences I gained while attending BSU, I would not be working here today.

**What is your current position at Bemidji State and what does that entail?** Currently, I am working as an Admissions Representative at Bemidji State. As an admissions representative, I recruit prospective students to attend Bemidji State University. I currently represent the high schools in central and south central Minnesota. As a native of northern Minnesota and alumni of BSU, I can answer any questions pertaining to student life on campus, academic programs, extracurricular activities, the residence halls, and any questions about the great city of Bemidji! My goal is to make sure that prospective students and their families discover if BSU is the right college for them.

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**Spring Schedule**

- 3/19 Fall Semester registration
- 3/23 Last day to withdrawal
- 4/4 Student Achievement Day
- 4/26 Reading Day
- 4/27 Finals begin
- 5/3 Spring Semester ends!
- 5/4 Commencement

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**Upcoming Campus Events**

- **Saturday, March 17**
  - Spring Choir Festival
  - Thompson Recital Hall, 12:00am

- **Tuesday March 20**
  - Mission Improvable: Improv Group
  - HS 100, 8:00pm

- **Saturday, March 22**
  - Jenn Grinels: Musician
  - Lower HMU, 11:30am

- **Saturday, March 31**
  - Festival of Nations
  - Beaux Arts Ballroom, 3:00-7:00pm

- **Sunday, April 15**
  - Symphonic Band Concert
  - Main Theatre, 3:00pm

- **Friday, April 13-Sunday, April 15**
  - BSU PowWow
  - John Glas Field House, Warm ups 7:00pm
  - John Glas Field House, Grand Entry 1:00pm & 7:00pm