When the going gets tough …

By Stuart D. Jones, Dean of Enrollment

A month into my freshman year at college, I wanted to drop out and go home. My next step was to convince my parents. During a weekend visit, I explained my unhappiness and desire to come home until I could figure out my next move. My father, quite sternly, said, “Stuart, if college was easy, everybody would do it. You’re not dropping out!” I headed back to campus angry and frustrated. A few years later, with college degree in hand, I was thankful for his tough love and determination that logic would preside over emotion.

Ironically, 30 years later, I sit in the Dean’s chair conducting exit interviews with students who want to drop out of Manchester College after only a few weeks. I want to say, “You’re not dropping out!” since I know their reasoning is based on emotion rather than logic. Some have already given in to their emotion – packed, with parents waiting in the car. Others listen to logic during our conversation and decide to stay. They are still here – and have thanked me for that.

When a student feels homesick or overwhelmed, emotion overtakes logic, and the desire to leave dominates their thinking. They are willing to forgo paid tuition and leave with no course credits to transfer in pursuit of emotional relief. That relief fades quickly once they return home and reality sets in – they have lost money, and have no job or credits to transfer elsewhere.

Many parents are quick to try and rescue their student. They want to fix their problems and heal their pain. But the bandage that truly heals the wound is not letting them drop out. “You’re not dropping out,” isn’t an easy message to hear, nor is it easy to deliver. But staying firm and offering positive support will challenge your student to work through their own difficult circumstances. It’s a lesson they must learn in life to be successful.

Read more about homesickness on the Counseling Services website.
The Writing Center, as a key component of the College’s Success Center, has become a well-utilized resource for students who seek writing assistance for class projects, as well as for graduate school and scholarship applications. Workshops in creative and technical writing, along with student and faculty readings and special events, provide opportunities for student participation and interaction. At a Writing Center sponsored Renaissance Fair last spring, students enjoyed poetry, music and quill and ink lessons.

The staff at the Writing Center takes a hands-on approach. Writing consultants assess the needs of each student and provide individual support, based on their strengths and weaknesses. An assessment also serves to put students into the right class for their ability level. Director Tamara O’Hearn says, “A thorough assessment results in less misplacement of students in courses that may be too difficult and increases their chance for success – that’s why we’re here.”

First-year students are given special consideration from consultants, who act as mentors to guide them through writing assignments and college-level expectations. “We experience a low rate of turnover with our writing consultants, which keeps our program growing stronger each year,” says O’Hearn.

Students can find the Writing Center in the College Union as part of the College’s Success Center, which is also home to the Offices of Academic Support, Career Services and the Honors Program.
Shop online at the MC Campus Store

The MC Campus Store is pleased to announce the grand opening of its new online store! Browse through all of your favorite MC merchandise, and order textbooks online. Have fun checking out new apparel and accessories that show your pride and support of Manchester College. And MC gear makes great gifts for students, alumni and other Spartan fans. Watch future Family Connections for special offers!

Visit the Campus Store.

Dates to remember

October
12-13 Fall break
(classes resume 8 a.m., Oct. 14)
14 MC Health Fair
20 End of first half-semester

November
25-29 Thanksgiving recess
(classes dismiss 6 p.m., Nov. 24; resume 8 a.m. Nov. 30)

December
14-17 Final examinations
23 Fall semester grades on Web Advisor

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