

Transitioning Together

A Mentor Program for First Generation Students Applying to College

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T² During A Pandemic

If there is one word that we would use to describe the T² Class of 2021, it would be RESILIENT! As with so many facets of our lives, the past seven months have been anything but typical for the T² Program. In normal times, we would have been meeting together as a big group on



a monthly basis, enjoying dinner together, going on college visits, and simply appreciating the opportunity to work on college applications in-person. Because the pandemic has taken away these types of opportunities, we have had to be creative with our programming - the students and mentors have all risen to the occasion, and we are thrilled to still be able to continue our amazing work together!

Instead of monthly evening meetings during the spring, we were able to offer a series of webinar style workshops - recorded monthly and distributed to mentees and mentors to watch when it was convenient for them. The webinar topics included the College Visit and Interview (presented by Jules Bannister of UMass-Amherst), the First Generation Student Experience (presented by Tatiana Havens of Wheaton College & Jeffrey Smith of Emmanuel College), and the College Essay (presented by Jane Hirshorn, a professional writing tutor). These webinars are all posted on the T² website under the Class of 2021 tab - take a look!

This past month, we offered our first live Zoom evening meeting - a Common App workshop where students were able to follow along a presentation by Ms. Hall and make edits to their applications in real time. It was a nice way for everyone to connect, see each other's faces and get some tangible work done on their applications. We are hoping to continue to offer similar opportunities over the next couple of months.

In addition to our evening meetings, we have stayed connected in other ways too! The new remote learning schedule allows the T² team and mentees to meet every Friday during Community Block, a 30 minute period in the late morning. During 'normal times,' we usually only have a 10 minute weekly homeroom meeting, so we are really appreciating the additional time we have together. It has given us a chance to answer questions about anything college-related on a weekly basis, but also to connect about other things going on in our lives and the world, like what it means to be an antiracist learner. Mentees and mentors have also continued to meet 1-on-1, via phone, Zoom or socially distant outside.

With the pandemic still going on, we will continue to be creative in the ways that we offer our programming, the ways in which we present our meetings and the avenues in which we connect with one another. We continue to be inspired by our motivated mentees who impress us with their engagement and excitement for the future, and we are so thankful for our mentors who have risen to the occasion and been creative in the ways in which they can support their students. Together we will get through this, and we will all have so much to look forward to in the future!



T² Team Members

- Melissa Hanenberger
*Director & Mentor
Coordinator*
- Jen Geraghty
*Alumni & Mentee
Coordinator*
- Jillian Hall
Programming Director



See the T² website:
www.nnhst2.org
for our complete
calendar of events,
important updates,
resources and forms.

Check it out!

T² Student Spotlight:

Johnny Poon, T² Class of 2020

UMass Lowell Class of 2024



TRANSITIONING TOGETHER's Alumni Coordinator, Jen Geraghty, asks Johnny some questions about his experience:

1. Congratulations on graduating—what a huge accomplishment! Tell us a little about your college experience thus far. How have things been going so far with the impact of the pandemic?

My college experience so far has been tough, since my semester is all online. I was hoping to move on campus until the unexpected announcement two weeks prior to the move-in date. I was kind of devastated but I knew it probably was the safest choice for the school. Now that everything's online, the resources at my school are different. Usually I would physically go to a teacher for help, but I've had to adapt to the situation and make the best of it. To counterbalance the stress of school while staying remote, I try to go out into nature or go for a short jog to help my mental health stay positive.

Now that you are in college, what do you wish you had known before you got there?

I wish I had known that you must be responsible for your own studying time, be very independent in your own work, and reach out for help when you need it. Something I didn't realize is that college classes run for one semester instead of the whole year, like in high school. A positive is that you can select more classes you are interested in rather than be stuck with one for the whole year, but the downside is that the semester moves very quickly and you need to be reviewing material every day to prepare well for your exams.

Was there a piece of advice (or specific experience) you remember from either your mentor or T² experience that has had a big impact on your transition to college?

One piece of advice that I remember from T² is that even though your school experience may have been impacted by COVID-19, you must remember to work even harder to graduate from college than you did in high school. North prepared us well and we cannot let this pandemic get in the way of our goals. A piece of advice from my mentor was to structure your day by literally writing down your plans (such as deadlines, tests, sports practices) on your phone calendar or wherever is convenient, so that you have no excuse to procrastinate.

What would you tell students thinking about being in Transitioning Together about the program?

Being in the Transitioning Together program was one of the best things I ever decided to do because you feel like you're not alone in this college process. Especially in Newton, the majority of kids have parents who have had experience of going through the college process and obtaining insider details on colleges, so sometimes you feel like you're lost and alone since you are a first-generation college student. This program really gave out the best resources that applied to everyone and is there to look out for you. They've built a sense of community in the school, and I could not have been more proud to be a part of that.

What suggestions do you have for students about to start the college application process?

Some suggestions I have for students who are about to start the college application process is do a lot of research with different websites and resources, and try to come up with a list of schools that best fit your interests in majors, along with other factors. Always check on deadlines and prepare for those deadlines well. For your college essay, always write from your heart and read it out loud several times to make sure it sounds like YOU. Remember you are showing your story to admissions, because you are unique!

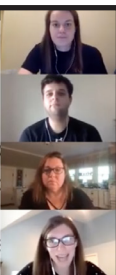
Congratulations T² Class of 2020

Welcome to the Transitioning Together Closing Ceremony

AGENDA

- 6:00pm - Welcome (Dr. Turner, NNHS Principal & Ms. Hanenberger, T² Director)
- 6:15pm - Introduction from Mr. Amedio, Alumni Coordinator
- 6:30pm - Thank You Videos & Messages

Following the meeting, Mr. Amedio will share with you our T² Alumni Panel webinar. During this webinar you will learn about the college experience of some actual T² alums. They will share about their experience as first generation college students on their college campuses. Panelists include: **Filippo Menozzi '19, Tommy Xia '17, Nia Hyppolite '19, Darla Vernet '18 and Tamika Vernet '18*



For the 7th year in a row, every T² senior was accepted into at least one 2 or 4 year college. We celebrated their successes with pizza delivery to every mentee's home and a Zoom Closing Ceremony on June 3, 2020. Mentees and mentors created videos and messages for each other that were shared during the celebration. Dr. Turner thanked our mentors for their dedication to their mentees, and T² Alumni Coordinator Brendan Amedio provided tips for a successful entry into college. Mentees were also provided with a T² Alumni webinar featuring five former T² mentees - Filippo Menozzi '19, Tommy Xia '17, Nia Hyppolite '19, Darla Vernet '18 and Tamika Vernet '18. Congratulations T² Class of 2020!

MENTEE	MENTOR	COLLEGE
Or-El Ankori	Gail Stein	Muhlenberg College
Jordyn Baldon	Vicky Stein	Lasell University
Alain Belcher	Sarah Fendrick	UMass Boston
Taylor Butler	Leslie Crane	Merrimack College
Francesco Campione	Jeff Sung	Fitchburg State University
Hao-Chuan Chao	Pam Wright	UMass Amherst
Le Chen	Julia Greenstein	UMass Dartmouth
Tiffany Chen	Rhanna Kidwell	Simmons University
Carmen Chu	Karin Gavish	Boston University
TreyVaughn Dames-Hill	Brian Eberman	University of New Haven
Dayla Depina	Katie Thatcher	St. John's University
Daniela Divo	Diana Doyle	UMass Amherst
Nathan Dorval	Michael Jablon	University of Rhode Island
Carolina Echeverri	Kathleen Olesky	UMass Boston
Kim Franco-Osorio	Liz Hartnick	Mass Bay Community College
Alan Gomez-Tagle	Stacey Ellender	UMass Amherst
Cristina Gonzalez Monroig	Rana Glasgal	Simmons University
Hefi Jiang	Audrey Stern	Babson College
Alana King	Sara Einis	Denison University (POSSE)
Yingxin Li	Mia Wenjen	Mass College of Art & Design
Xi Luo	Fannie Young	University of Southern California
Anamaris Morfin-Beltran	Jane Venti	Lesley University
Bianca Nascimento	Karen Lapsley	UMass Amherst
Jezebel Perez	Heidi Cheris	Lesley University
Anyaa Peters	Susan Haber	Bridgewater State University
Johnny Poon	Jack Goldsmith	UMASS Lowell
Imani Rather	Jenn Prince	St. Joseph's University
Julian Santiago	Don Ross	UMass Boston
Omar Shoura	Claire Sokoloff	Northeastern University
Amar Skelly	Jack Goldsmith	Framingham State University
Priscila Souza	Janet Hart	Mass Bay Community College
Vy Trieu	Eileen Morrison	Boston University
Rosa Velazque	Margaret Covert	Lesley University
Sammi Yang	Laura Holt	Boston University
Hallie Zenga-Josephson	Maruta Vitols	Harvard College
Casey Zhang	Susan Case	MCPHS

Congratulations to waitlist mentees: Ahmani Dardy, UMSS Dartmouth; Samantha Cao, Babson College; Sasha Espady, Bunker Hill CC; Melton Fan, UC-San Diego & Christian Gonzalez, Lasell University.



HALLIE ZENGA-JOSEPHSON
HARVARD COLLEGE '24

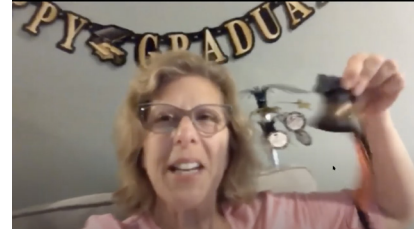
Dear KAREN,
I don't even know where to begin, other than with the facts, which is that I'm so incredibly grateful for you, Karen. You made one of the hardest periods of my life seem less scary and became someone who I truly trust in the process. Thank you for the best past 18 months and for your support to this day, you're the best!
BIANCA NASCIMENTO
UMASS AMHERST '24



ALAIN BELCHER
UMASS BOSTON '24

Katie, Katie, Katie, My feelings about Katie now have been the same if not stronger than they were 18 months ago when Katie and I first met. Since the first time we met, she welcomed me with open arms and kept those arms open for me throughout the entire college process. Not only am I thankful to the best mentor ever, but I am also thankful and appreciative to Ms. Geraghty, Ms. Hanenberger and Ms. Hall.

DAYLA DEPINA
ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY '24



Hey LIZ,
Thank you for all your help this past 18 months. It's so sad that we're not going to be together no more. But I'll always check up on you and see how you're doing. Can't believe it has come to an end. Thank you for helping with everything I needed. Thank you for being the best support in my decisions. I wish the best and I will miss you!!
Love,
KIM FRANCO-OSORIO
MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE '22

Class of 2021 T² Mentees Participate in Newton Summer Internship Experience

Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, some of our T² mentees participated in the Summer High School Internship Program at Newton City Hall! This program strives to “serve as a hands-on learning experience for young adults in the Newton community.” Students dedicated 10-15 hours per week for six weeks over the summer to an internship placement in local businesses, non-profit organizations, and city departments. Students are matched with a site based on their interests. According to students, this internship program “helped teach us 21st century work skills like sending emails and creating a resume.” In addition to their time spent



at internship placements, students also attended a virtual weekly workshop with Quinn Etchie, *Director of Youth Services at City Hall*, to build skills such as interviewing, financial literacy, and team building.

The following T² mentees participated in a City of Newton Summer 2020 Internship:

Amy Xue - New Art Center

Jaleika Heredia - Newton Senior Center (*left photo on left*)

Grayson Snow - Newton Planning and Development
(*photo above on right*)

Call for T² Class of 2022

Are you interested in going to college? Would you be the first in your family to attend college in the US? Are you nervous about the whole process? Would you welcome help? T² is here for you. Please visit www.nnhst2.org to learn more and email Jen Geraghty (geraghtyj@newton.k12.ma.us) or your school counselor for an application. Students will be notified of their T² acceptance status by **Tuesday, December 22nd**.

Important dates for the incoming Class of 2022:

Tuesday, November 25th: T² Application Deadline

Tuesday, December 22nd: Notification of T² Acceptance

Thursday, January 14th: First T² Meeting and Junior Family Night



Transitioning Together

www.nnhst2.org

Newton North High School

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