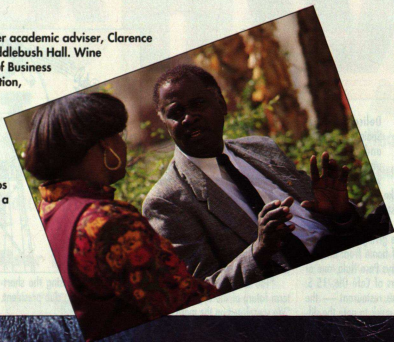


Shanyle Tripp and her academic adviser, Clarence Wine, talk outside Middlebush Hall. Wine works in the College of Business and Public Administration, where Tripp will soon be a major. "We talk about lots of things — school, our personal lives," Tripp says. "Our last talk was about the pros and cons of becoming a resident assistant at Wakonse next year."



How do you turn a large research university into a place where undergraduates shine? You look at life through the eyes of a student, like Shanyle Tripp, and help her find her niche.



To do well

STORY BY DALE SMITH
PHOTOS BY MIKE DESANTIS

Shaneyle Tripp is making the most of her time at MU. "Almost everybody from back home went to party schools," says the Kansas City native, "but I'm not at school to party. I'm here to get an education." In the meantime, she's made several important connections to MU.

The education she's getting goes far beyond lectures and books. She is involved in organizations like Inroads, which help her build career skills. But she's also part of the Honors College Community Involvement Program, where she is mentor to a local high-school student.

All things considered, Tripp has arranged her life to pack in a lot of living and learning. "What keeps me going is that I know I have a place in the world somewhere, and I won't get there unless I'm educated."

Her singular sense of purpose seems all the more potent because she has found her

niche on campus. She knows that she belongs to something bigger than herself. "I feel that I fit in, that I'm not different from everyone else. We're all struggling to do well in our classes. We help each other."

Tripp's relationship with MU began the summer after her junior year in high school when she attended the Alpha Academy. This eight-week summer program introduces some of Missouri's brightest minority students to college life through college prep course work and plenty of extracurriculars such as aerobics.

Spending time here answered any questions she might have had about attending the University. "I went home and applied for admission. I knew that I was going to school in Missouri and, if I couldn't go to MU, I just would have stayed home for college."

Tripp is glad she didn't stay home.

In the following sections, we outline a few of MU's programs that build

relationships with students from their very first contacts with the University. It's these linkages that help them succeed.

First impressions

Prospective students like to have a relationship with their future alma mater. They like to be courted.

- As part of an early overture to high-school students, the admissions office includes a reply card with artwork of two MU students. The pitch is, "Ask Nekeesha and Jim." High-school students send back queries on topics from costs to course offerings. The questions are answered personally by Nekeesha Packer of St. Louis and Jim Massey of Odessa, Mo.
- For parents of prospective students, a similar "Ask the Chancellor" approach had its first run this year. Questions included everything from the ever-present concern about costs to the safety of campus life.
- In Kansas City and St. Louis, the admissions office holds workshops that help high-school students plan for college.

Living and learning

Five new theme floors will open this fall as well as a Wakonse Residence that will pair top faculty mentors with students committed to learning.

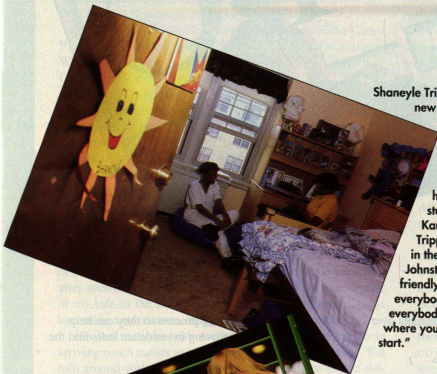
"These halls are intentionally designed to integrate academic and co-curricular experiences to promote student learning," says Dr. Charles Schroeder, vice chancellor for student affairs. "When students feel connected, when they feel involved, they do well."

Theme halls

Students can take advantage of new theme floors, including fine arts, Spanish, French, women in engineering, pre-nursing and pre-law.

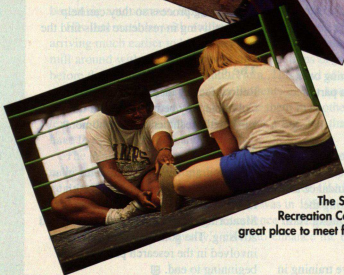
Wakonse

In Hatch Hall, Wakonse students will work closely with faculty members and have opportunities to perform community service. Some vacancies exist for freshmen; call either Dr. Bill Bondeson, professor of philosophy, at (314) 882-6790, or Dr. Joe Johnston, director, Career Planning and Placement Center, at (314) 882-0699.

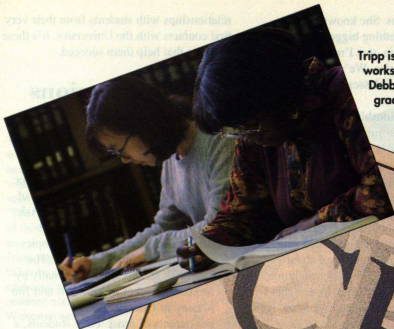


Shaneyle Tripp recruits new students, too.

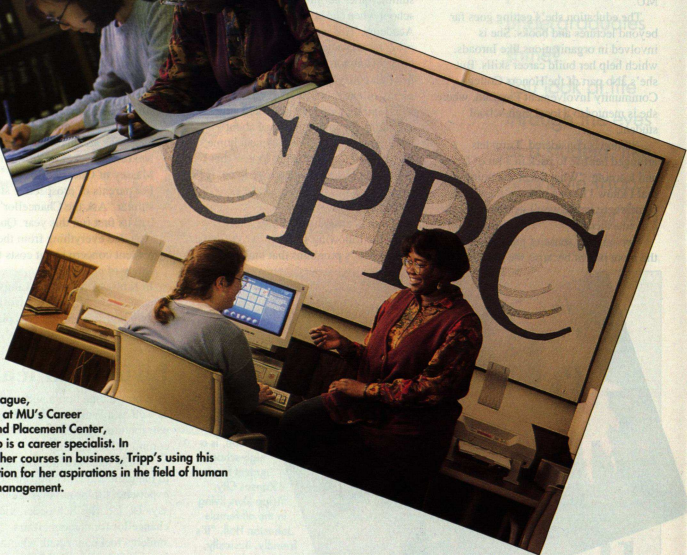
Her overnight visitor, Kimberly Hutson, is a high-school student from Kansas City. Tripp likes living in the all-female Johnston Hall. "It's friendly. Basically, everybody knows everybody. This is where your friendships start."



The Student Recreation Center is a great place to meet friends.



Tripp is a serious student. She works here at Ellis Library with Debbie Hsieh of Taiwan, a graduate student in accounting.



Tripp visits with a colleague, Niki Finley, at MU's Career Planning and Placement Center, where Tripp is a career specialist. In addition to her courses in business, Tripp's using this as preparation for her aspirations in the field of human resources management.

Freshman success

Donnelly Hall is the site of the Freshman Success Initiative, which began in fall 1993. For freshmen only, Donnelly has more than twice the usual number of resident assistants per student as other halls. Workshops allow residents to interact with top faculty; a study-partner program is in place; and tutoring is offered for students enrolled in math, English and some other large lecture classes.

More options

Other opportunities in residence halls revolve around graduate and professional students; internationals; juniors and

seniors; and students over 21.

Advice

Several initiatives are in planning or in place to make advising more a part of everyday life for students.

Going to students

Advisers will travel to students in the all-freshman Donnelly Hall and to Greek houses as well. This spring, guidance also was available once a week during the evening meal time at Dobbs Dining Hall.

Better trained RAs

Resident assistants will receive training in

the advising process so they can help students living in residence halls find the best resources.

The comeback

Retired faculty members who live in Columbia may be recruited and trained for work with freshmen and sophomores.

Mentoring

This program will match students in formal mentoring relationships with faculty members who do research. Mentoring is both a form of learning and advising. The goal is to get students involved in the research process from beginning to end. ☐