

The Shankle Family

“Family Affair Series” - November 2014

Unlike many of our student highlights, this is the Shankle family’s first time here at SIU. They chose SIU primarily for the location, they moved here from St. Louis, MO to be closer to family members as their son Maxwell grows up. Samantha previously earned a bachelor’s degree in history but returned to school to study dental hygiene. She is currently in the process of completing her prerequisites. When Jonathan decided to go back to school, he started a John A Logan College to help him get back into the swing of things. Now that he is at SIU, he plans to major in engineering once and hopes to be accepted into the program this upcoming semester.



Samantha, Jonathan, and Maxwell Shankle

For them, balancing school and their other responsibilities have been very challenging thus far in the semester. It was over a month into the semester before they were able to secure child care for their 15-month-old son and Jonathan said, “It’s hard, it’s hard when you have [your baby] wanting your computer, your attention, your books, your pens.” Additionally on the subject of balancing responsibilities Samantha added “Every time I see a single mom, who is a full time student, and full time worker, I am like you’re bomb diggity! Because I am having a rough time and I can’t imagine how they do it.”

Their personal time together has decreased tremendously, which makes starting this school year a little bit harder, but once a month they have a nanny come over so they can go out and see a movie. They practically spend every minute of free time they have studying so time is very precious to this family. Now that their son is going to day care, they hope this will help lighten things up a bit at least during the day.

Another challenge they have had to cover come is finances. Luckily, they feel they have several options when it comes to financial aid but going to school full-time has forced them to cut their work hours back to part time, putting a financial strain on them. The advice this busy family would like to give other students that are going through a similar situation is that if you are struggling, ask questions there are people out there, and different organizations that are available to you, whether it be child care or financial assistance. Someone can help you.

Jonathan Shankle is a freshman with plans to major in engineering. Samantha Shankle is pursuing a degree in dental hygiene.