SSS Spring Recognition Dinner

by Sandy Straley

The historical Laramie Train Depot was the setting for this year’s SSS Spring Recognition Dinner on April 21. Students and guests enjoyed a nice dinner of fried chicken with the trimmings plus graduation cake. Fifty-one SSS students who received SSS Scholarships/Stipends for spring semester were recognized. Current officers for the SSS student organization, AFA (Advocates for Achievement), were honored for their work and service. Next year’s AFA officers (see article, p. 3) were introduced. The new officers spoke briefly about AFA and they encouraged other SSS participants to join the organization.

Angela Tatro was thrilled to learn that she was the winner of the Charlie Harris Centennial Wyoming Scholarship for $1200. The highlight of the evening was hearing from the SSS students who were graduating from the University of Wyoming. Twenty-four senior SSS participants graduated this year. Those in attendance announced the degree they had earned, their future plans, and what had helped them be successful UW students.

Many graduates recognized their SSS Advisor as someone who helped them succeed. They also advised younger students to persist and not give up. The SSS staff especially appreciated the voluntary assistance by AFA members both before and after the event.

SSS Students Visit the Capitol for Educational Access Day

by Sandy Straley

Three current and one former SSS student traveled to Cheyenne in February to visit the Legislature and witness Governor Fruedenthal declaring Feb. 26, 2009, as Educational Access Day. The students joined other TRiO and GEAR-UP students from around the state. The group was introduced and recognized when they visited both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The students also toured the Capitol building and learned of its history. In addition to meeting the governor, another highlight was having lunch with Cathy Connolly who is serving her first term as a representative from Laramie.

Cathy led the SSS students onto the House floor and showed how her desk and work are organized. She took time to answer many questions about the legislative process and her typical day.

Educational Access Day draws attention to the need to give everyone equal access to higher education. Melanie summarized her feelings about the day, “Being able to visit the capital was an amazing experience. It’s one thing to learn about the legislation in class, but being able to witness it happening really solidified the process in my mind.”
Jennifer Reza  
SSS Student  
by Jennifer Reza

I am a first-generation college student and have participated in the SSS program since starting college in 2002. My college career has been full of challenges and hardships. In the Fall of 2003, I was placed on academic probation for failing grades. Besides being a first generation college student, money was scarce. Student grants and loans helped me with the finances, but during my third semester in school, I was diagnosed with depression and placed on anti-depressants. Unfortunately, it was too late to save my grades. After a semester off, I enrolled at LCCC and subsequently graduated with an Associate’s Degree in Business Management and Entrepreneurship.

I then returned to the University of Wyoming to work on a Bachelor’s of Science in Business Management. Today I am a senior in the College of Business working on my degree in Business Management. During the course of my college career, I have received three scholarships: $100 as a stipend award from SSS, a Daniel’s Opportunity Award scholarship for $3,000, and an Andrikopoulos Family Scholarship for $3,166 for the 2009-2010 school year from the College of Business.

After college I plan to operate my own bookstore in Austin, Texas, where I will be moving, and I may continue my education by obtaining a Master’s in Business Administration or PhD in Management from the University of Texas at Austin.

Bonnie Youmans  
SSS Student  
by Ken Zajac

After graduating from high school and attending a community college for a semester, Bonnie Youmans didn’t think college was for her. She quit and worked for a few years. A chance encounter with a former teacher spurred her to rethink the decision to leave college. She enrolled at the University of Wyoming and began an incredible new journey. Bonnie graduated from UW in 2007 with a degree in Microbiology. Bonnie was a SSS student and at the prompting of her SSS advisor, she applied to the McNair Scholars Program. With McNair, she traveled to New York City, Houston, the University of Arkansas and several other universities to explore graduate school opportunities.

During her junior year at UW, she spent the summer at the Baylor College of Medicine in the Summer Medical and Research Training Program for undergraduate students interested in careers in scientific research. At the completion of her senior year, Bonnie was accepted by the Baylor College of Medicine. Above is a picture of the future Dr. Bonnie Youmans the morning after passing her qualifying exams for candidacy to a doctoral program at Baylor. Bonnie’s doctoral thesis will be on the topic of the Human Microbiome Project, an endeavor focusing on identifying bacterial communities of the human body.

Laura Ulmer  
SSS Student  
by Bill Anderson

Laura was in my First Year Experience class in 2005. She was told she wouldn’t make it into Nursing School because of her low math scores. Laura wanted to be a nurse ever since she was diagnosed with diabetes at age 14. Laura was one of seven brothers and sisters, and her parents could not afford to pay her medical insurance and send her to college at the same time. Laura needed to figure out how to fund college on her own. She applied for scholarships, filed her FASFA on time, and worked her way through school with minimal amounts of debt.

She looked the math demon in the eye right away by taking Math 900. She passed that class and other subsequent math classes until she met the math requirements and was accepted in the Nursing Program at UW. “I know what kind of learner I am. So I make a plan every semester and talk with my professors, receive tutoring when I need it, and let Bill know as soon as I am in a place where it feels like there is no return.”

This fall will be Laura’s last year at UW. She will do her clinicals in the spring and graduate in May 2010. Laura will do a post residency in nursing in Colorado, then looks forward to marriage and raising an family. She plans to return to school at a future date to become a Nurse Practitioner.

Jennifer Reif  
SSS Student  
by Jennifer Reif

I am a junior at the University of Wyoming majoring in Kinesiology and Health Promotion; my concentration is in pre-physical therapy. I hope to earn a doctorate degree in physical therapy and possibly have my own physical therapy clinic someday. I am very interested in helping others improve their quality of life and I want to help them understand the benefits of properly performed physical activity.

I was born and raised in the Black Hills of South Dakota just 7 miles south of the little town Deadwood. Growing up as an only child, I spent a lot of time outdoors with my parents. I am also a big animal lover. As a child, my family and I had five cats and one dog. Today we have three cats and two dogs, so as one can tell pets have always been a big part of my life.

Throughout high school I played volleyball and ran in track and field. Some of my hobbies are running, hiking, camping, Namaste yoga, and reading a good book every once in a while. In addition, I spend some of my free time volunteering at the Albany County Animal Shelter.

I am looking forward to being the president of AFA and hope to meet some new faces throughout the year. I believe that getting involved in a student organization is very beneficial. Not only does it get you involved on campus, but it also helps establish new friendships. It can provide support, bring about challenges, and enhance many important skills such as leadership. I believe that AFA is going to have a fun year ahead of them!
WHAT'S HAPPENING

Etiquette Enthusiasm: UW President’s Office Sponsored Etiquette Dinner

by Bill Anderson

The third Etiquette Dinner, sponsored by the University of Wyoming Office of the President and hosted by Jacque Buchanan for Student Success Services students, was held this spring at the Foundation House. The purpose of the event was to help SSS students feel comfortable interacting in a social dining and professional setting.

The event started with a “mocktail” hour where students mingled with other students, SEO staff, and Sara Axelson, Vice President of Student Affairs. UW Chef, David Asmuth, greeted the guests, told them about his background, how he became a chef, and then provided guidance on how to use the silverware (from the outside in). He announced each course and how it was prepared. All agreed Chef Asmuth created an elegant presentation of a delicious five-course dining experience.

Students provided dinner entertainment with skits demonstrating appropriate and inappropriate dress and behavior in a formal job interview situation. Jacque said the skits were educational and very funny. She thought the students in Student Success Services are a remarkable group of people. I really enjoyed the evening.”

Jacque and I look forward to the next etiquette dinner. SEO/SSS students and staff extend a warm thank you to the President and Jacque Buchanan for providing us with an extraordinary experience.

AFA Adventures

by Jeremy Guzman

Hello All! Advocates For Achievement has had quite a productive and exciting semester. Since our last addition to the Letter Buck, AFA members enjoyed our second annual bowling potluck, visited Wyoming’s State Capitol for Educational Access Day, designed our exclusive member’s only T-shirt, participated in a cultural event as a group to see the performing arts of Diavolo, discovered just how successful a spaghetti dinner and dessert auction can be as a fund raiser, celebrated a successful semester as a group by enjoying a social event at Lovejoys, and volunteered at the Student Success Services year-end recognition dinner. As the semester progressed, it sure did not feel as if we had such a busy agenda, nevertheless, in retrospect it is very amazing how much we accomplished in AFA.

AFA members will unquestionably miss being under the direction and counsel of our chief founding advisor Athena Kennedy. Athena brought so much energy, so many different ideas, so much excitement and charisma to AFA as well as guiding each of us to higher levels of leadership. The shining passion she unfailingly displayed for her students will always remain in our hearts and we all hope to carry her torch to future generations of AFA members.

As for now, AFA members are enjoying a much deserved summer break after the ever-enduring winter (aka “spring”) semester. We are looking forward to meeting our new advisor in the fall. AFA members have high expectations for the next advisor, who should have no worries about the duties as our new advisor. After all we will all help to fill Athena’s shoes and lead AFA in the right direction!

SSS Spring Graduates

Alexander, Erin  Art, B.A.
Anderson, Tyler  Agricultural Business, B.S.
Ballinger, Marcelle  Criminal Justice, B.A.
Billings, Savannah  Biology, B.A.
Bradin, Annmarie  Elementary Education, B.A.
Collen, Jennifer  Kinesiology/Health Promotion, B.S.
Curry, Reineette  Elementary Education, B.A.
Dimit, Ashley  Social Work, B.S.
Elk, Melissa  Art/Secondary Education, B.A.
Erickson, Kristen  Animal/Veterinary Science, B.S.
Franks, Heather  Management Information Systems, B.S.
Good, Geneva  Agricultural Communications, B.S.
Gumpton, Stacy  Art, B.A.
Hall, Rachel  Elementary Education, B.A.
Hartman, Lisa  Social Studies, B.A.
Hoyt, Amanda  Psychology/Criminal Justice, B.A.
Jaynes, Roy  Art, B.A.
Kimsey, Travis  RanchlandEcology/Watershed Mgt, B.S.
Levitt, David  Communications, B.A.
Michaud, Anissa  Business Administration, B.S.
Murdock, John  Finance, B.S.
Shane, Deanna  Wildlife/Fisheries Biology Mgt, B.S.
Stansbury, Carisa  Zoology/Physiology, B.S.
Stoneking, Nick  Physical Education, B.S.

New AFA Officers

President . . . Jennifer Reif
Executive Vice President . . . Lisa Abeyta
Secretary . . . Jeremy Guzman
Treasurer . . . Becky Brix
### FYE Peer Mentors

Each year SSS Advisors select students who possess leadership qualities, good communication skills, and who have achieved academically to serve as peer mentors for incoming first year students in our fall First Year Experience class, UWYO1205. Those selected for fall, 2009, are Lisa Abeyta, Kendra Haas, Debbie Mackey, and Erica Roybal. Peer mentors receive training for their new roles prior to students arriving on campus and throughout the fall semester. This year will be special for the mentors in that they are also being trained as peer leaders for the Freshman Summit Program. Mentors will meet with new UWYO1205 participants before classes begin. Summit goals coincide with SSS goals to provide support to our FYE students and give them strategies for a successful transition to UW. We welcome our new peer mentors and look forward to the upcoming fall semester.

### Hit the Ground Running!

**by Rita Burleson**

Student Success Services first year students have the opportunity to hit the ground running when they enroll in the UWYO1205 First Year Experience course in the fall semester. Not only does the course offer SSS students strategies to improve their study skills, it also teaches students how to become active, responsible learners who succeed in college. Students complete a self assessment at the beginning of the course to measure their motivation for college learning. This information helps them get ready to step up and play for the A in their college classes. Those who take the course learn that they are creators of their experiences, for good or bad, and that life is about making wise choices for success. But that’s not all! UWYO1205 is a double hitter! The course fulfills I (Intellectual Community) and L (Information Literacy) attributes of the University Studies Program. Not bad for a one credit course that meets for two 50 minute periods a week.

Spring 2010 will be the first time SSS offers a second course, UWYO1210, to students who successfully complete UWYO1205. With the 1210 offering, SSS can now provide a true first year experience for its students. UWYO1210 will focus on career exploration and career goal setting. The course will give students opportunities to familiarize themselves with the nitty-gritty of their career choice and plan their college years to optimize their career preparation. Students will create, design, and write their resumes and hold mock interviews with career professionals. In UWYO 1210 students will hone their interpersonal and social skills for success in their academic and professional lives, in two 50 minute periods a week.

### Program Contact Information:

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A UWYO1205 class posing for a picture.