This year’s Student Success Services Fall Connection was held September 17, 2009, in downtown Laramie’s historic Union Pacific train depot. Approximately 100 participants enjoyed the several platters of Mexican food from Corona Village. While the Fall Connection is a great way for first year students to learn about the SSS program, all in attendance also were able to hear success stories from junior and senior SSS members. Clair Naylor, senior in International Studies, discussed her study abroad experience in England. Jennifer Steiner, junior in Pharmacology, shared her knowledge of how to transfer from a UW undergraduate program to one of our professional schools. Aylin Marquez, senior in Mathematics, explained to all why she decided to apply to the McNair Scholars Program for post-graduate education and what steps she took to gain acceptance into the program. Finally, Sarah Sawin, junior in Architectural Engineering, provided information on how to land an internship as she had done the previous summer at Warren Air Force Base. Continuing what has become a tradition at the Fall Connection, the tables and gathering space in the depot were enlivened with flowers from SSS Advisor Bill Anderson’s garden. SSS Project Director Sandy Straley announced door prizes throughout the evening and SSS Advocates for Achievement (AFA) members helped with set up, clean up, and took time to introduce themselves and their purpose as a UW recognized student organization. Among those in attendance were UW President, Tom Buchanan, and his wife, Jacque, who greatly assists SSS with the Spring Junior-Senior Etiquette Dinner; Vice President of Student Affairs, Sara Axelson; Assistant to the Vice President, John Nutter; Coe Librarian, Cass Kvenild; Department Head, Family & Consumer Sciences, Karen Williams, and Travis Deti and Linda Valent, representatives from Wyoming Senators John Barrasso’s and Michael Enzi’s offices.
For the past three years the SSS program has been a major contributor to getting me where I am today. In my first semester, I enrolled in the UWYO 1205 course and met my advisor, Ken Zajac. I have been his class peer mentor for the next two fall semesters and enjoyed the opportunity to help freshmen adjust to college and get through their first semester.

Being a college freshman can be a difficult adjustment. My peer mentor role is to be someone the students could feel comfortable relating to and to help them work through different problems, conflicts, and issues. I am also there to cheer them on when they accomplished something they’d been striving for. It always puts a warm, fuzzy feeling inside me when I’m able to help a student, cheer them up, or make a positive impact in their life.

From being a peer mentor, I learned a great deal about leadership, and that it isn’t always about being in charge; it’s about building a relationship, trust, and respect. Without those three things, very little can be accomplished.

I would like to thank SSS for being such a great program, and all the students for being themselves.

Hello everybody! My name is Deborah Mackey, a peer mentor for this school year’s incoming freshmen, and I was a peer mentor last school year as well. I am a senior in Finance at the College of Business. I will be graduating in May and will also be getting married soon too! I loved being a peer mentor for Student Success Services. I learned a lot from my students, and I also liked helping them. I experienced everything, good and bad, during my first semester, so I could offer help with any problem I came across. It was so much fun and exciting. I would totally do this again for another semester, but I won’t be here for another semester, but that’s all right. I will be starting a new adventure once I graduate. For anyone interested in becoming a peer mentor, and aren’t sure if it is a good idea, I would say just go for it. It is a great learning experience for both you and the freshmen you meet, I guarantee it!

Meet Katie Ludwin — New SSS Advisor

My name is Katie Ludwin, and I am the newest advisor in Student Success Services. It is an exciting change for me to be a part of SEO and Student Affairs, and I feel fortunate to be here. For the past two and a half years, I worked in academic support for UW Athletics; I am new to working in TRiO programs, and am enjoying it very much so far. I am thrilled to be taking over the position as the Advocates for Achievement (AFA) advisor and look forward to teaching UWYO 1205 next fall.

I was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, and did my undergraduate studies at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. After moving to the Colorado Rockies to ski, play, and “figure out the rest of my life,” I attended graduate school at the University of Northern Colorado, obtaining a degree in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in higher education. My husband decided to pursue his graduate degree at the University of Wyoming, and that is what brought us to Laramie in the summer of 2007.

I enjoy spending my free time outside and regularly get out of town to camp, ski, and explore. We are expecting our first child in April – my life will soon be changing drastically! Thanks for welcoming me so warmly into SEO.
SSS Student Achievement

I am a recent graduate from the University of Wyoming who was a three-year participant in the SSS program. With their help and support, I successfully completed my undergraduate education and obtained a B.S. degree in Zoology and Physiology. Following graduation, I now hold a graduate research position at the University of Idaho where I am working on the new method of non-invasive genetic sampling to evaluate population dynamics and pack structure of gray wolves in the state of Idaho. Non-invasive genetic sampling uses animal sign such as scat, hair, feathers, or saliva to obtain DNA and identify individuals through genetic analyses.

This emerging new method allows researchers and managers to monitor wildlife populations such as wolves without the need for trapping, immobilizing, handling, or directly observing individuals, making it a safer alternative for both wildlife and wildlife managers. Thanks to the resources the SSS program has provided me, I am where I want to be today, working in a field I am passionate about.

AFA News

On Tuesday, December 1, 2009, Advocates for Achievement (AFA) held an end-of-semester de-stresser. The group, consisting of 17 students, played Disney Charades and devoured pizza and cookies. These students know their Disney characters! The event was a great way to relax at the end of the semester and to get to know fellow AFA members, newcomers and veterans alike. The potential for organizational growth is exciting. We look forward to a busy spring semester filled with volunteering, fundraising, and supporting one another!

AFA will meet for its first spring meeting on Tuesday, January 19, at 6:00 p.m. in Knight Hall, Room 238. For information on AFA, please email Katie Ludwin at kludwin@uwyo.edu.

About SSS

UW Student Success Services (SSS) assists first-generation and limited income students, and students with disabilities with one-on-one counseling to achieve success in college in the following areas:

- Academics
- Personal/Social
- Major/Career choice
- Assistance with financial aid/scholarship applications

We continuously recruit students for our program. Please refer students interested in applying to Sandy Straley at sstrate2@uwyo.edu or to our website, www.uwyo.edu/seo/SSS, to print an application. SSS is funded 100% by a grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education at $374,891 annually with a scholarship contribution from the University of Wyoming.

Study Abroad Student

Junior Alyssa Murphy is the winner of a $1000 scholarship to study abroad during the 2010 spring semester. Alyssa is using the International Studies Abroad program to study in Viña del Mar in Chile. As an International Studies major with a concentration in Latin America, studying in Chile for five months will greatly enhance her educational experience. Alyssa states, “I know this amazing experience is a once in a lifetime opportunity; one that I thought I would never see as a first generation student.”

The SSS Study Abroad Scholarship was made possible by President Buchanan directing the UW Foundation to designate $5000 for SSS participants to use for study abroad. SSS students planning on studying abroad during summer or fall of 2010 should watch for the next round of application for the SSS Study Abroad Scholarship and submit by March 15, 2010.

Carisa R. Stansbury

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UW Fall 2009 Summit

The first ever Summit, a UW first year student transition program, was held from August 27-29, 2009. Events helped students interact with experienced students, connect with instructors, learn about college life and expectations, and begin the transition from high school to postsecondary identities. For three days of events, SSS participants were grouped with their UWYO 1205 classmates and led by their SSS peer mentor. On Saturday, SSS students traveled to Curt Gowdy State Park for a fun day of outdoor activities. Interactive activities helped SSS students and staff become acquainted and begin to form a supportive group. Activities included Trolleys (crossing the lava), I’ve Never, Happy Salmon, and Wireless Communication. After lunch, students divided into three groups to meet with their UWYO 1205 instructor and peer mentor. Students were given an introduction to the 1205 course and the opportunity to obtain answers to their questions about transitioning to college. Students who participated in Summit activities felt they had a jump-start to college and to making connections with other students.