Student Success Services
University of Wyoming
Laramie, WY

About SSS
UW Student Success Services (SSS) assists first-generation, limited income students, and students with disabilities, in achieving college success in the following areas:
- Academics
- Personal/social life
- Major/career choice
- Assistance with financial aid/scholarship applications and personal finances

We continuously recruit students for our program. Please refer students interested in applying to Sandy Straley at sstraley@uwyo.edu or to our website, www.uwyo.edu/seo/sss, to print an application.
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Inside this Issue:
Getting Personal 2
Fall Summit 3
AFA Adventures 3
Fall Graduates 3
SSS Nutcracker Activity 4
Hello, Goodbye! 4

Fall Connection

By Rita Burleson

Student Success Services (SSS) hosted over one hundred attendees at the annual Fall Connection. The majority of participants were SSS first year students, followed by returning students who know a good dinner and entertainment when it comes around. The evening began with Sara Axelson, Vice President of Student Affairs, giving the welcoming address and then Sandy Straley, Project Director for SSS, introducing faculty and fellow TRiO project members at the dinner.

Brie Berwick, Advocates for Achievement (AFA) Treasurer, gave a short presentation on AFA, the SSS Recognized Student Organization (RSO). She highlighted how students could stretch their confidence with minimal risk taking by joining AFA and becoming leaders in the RSO. Next, SSS advisors recognized their December graduates: Becky Brix, BS Agriculture and Natural Resources; Angela Brown, BA Psychology; and Amy Suchor, BS Business Administration.

The finale of the SSS dinner was student presentations on their experiences studying abroad or working an internship. Spanish major Alyssa Murphy spoke of her study abroad in Chile. Not only was she able to improve her Spanish by mingling with native Spanish speakers and her house mother, she also shared the experience of living through the earthquake that hit Santiago. Even though she was farther up the coast in Concepción, she was on the eleventh floor of a swaying high rise. We’re glad she made it back without injury!

Ashlee Kintzler shared what she learned during her internship with Pitchengine.com, a global company headquartered in Wyoming. Ashlee put her Journalism major to work attending sales and marketing conferences on how to grow a company.

Scott Cheney seeks to one day become a museum curator. He studied abroad in Bulgaria learning how to restore medieval church frescos. He was one of a small international team chosen for the work, and he intends to continue his research as part of the McNair Scholars Program. His work also earned him a dinner invitation from Lynn Cheney in Wilson, Wyoming, at the Scarlett family residence on December 28, as part of a fundraiser for the Cheney International Center at UW. As an aside, Scott does not claim direct descent from our former Vice President.

Wyoming Public Radio, UW Cultural Programs, McNair Scholars Program, Education Opportunity Center, and UW Student Activity Center sponsored the event. The dinner was held at the old downtown Union Pacific Train Station, with food by Corona Village.
### Becky Brix  
**SSS Student**

What a rollercoaster it’s been! Entering UW as a freshman I had little to no self confidence. I was super shy and overwhelmed by it all. I was working four jobs, taking 15 credit hours and sleeping when I could. I definitely wasn’t partying my freshman year away. It soon became clear that this was not sustainable in the long term. My attitude is more positive and my overall outlook has been enhanced. Needless to say, it has not always been easy and there have been rough patches where I’ve wondered if it’s worth it. But remember it is! Don’t be afraid to ask for help—reach out to the people and resources available to help you. Take it one day at a time and never forget your goals. I am proud to say that all the hard work in the classroom, workplace and within the campus has paid off. I am graduating with a BS in Agricultural Business in 3 ½ years with several prospects of employment on the horizon. I will still be in Laramie – hope to see you around!

### Martha Ramos  
**SSS Student**

My name is Martha Verenise Ramos. I was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. I am half way done with my junior year at UW although I’m barely half way done with my schooling. I am a Nursing and Spanish major with a minor in International Studies. SSS has been a part of my entire experience at UW and has probably been my most supportive organization throughout the last three years. Thanks to SSS I was able to accomplish one of my most desired goals which was to study abroad. I remember the day when we had Ruth come talk to our SSS class about study abroad opportunities, and that’s when the seed was planted. The following semester, I remember hearing a few SSS students share their study abroad experience at the annual banquet, and I convinced myself that I had to go abroad. A year later I decided to take the study abroad preparation class, which officially began the process. After a whole lot of research and, of course, help from my SSS advisor Ken Zajac—it was official. I would study abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina! I recently returned from Argentina, and immersing myself in a completely new culture and society was the experience of a lifetime. I gained unforgettable friends and a family away from home. I look forward to achieving other great things with the help of SSS.

### Amy Suchor  
**SSS Student**

My college story is about perseverance, dedication, and having the strength to continue. I started college in 2005 as a young freshman thinking college would be easy. I quickly found out how wrong I was. At the end of my first semester, I was on academic probation and scared. As all my friends were giving up and moving, I knew I had to stick to this college thing. It wasn’t easy to come back spring semester of my first year and know how close I was to being suspended. I worked hard, and I made it through. Unlike most students, I declared my major in the third year of college. I couldn’t raise my GPA high enough in the previous years to have a major. Finally, I decided to pursue business. It was frustrating, but it was well worth all the hard work. I finally made it all the way to the top, first getting on the dean’s list, and then having a 4.0 and making it on the president’s list. Those two semesters were probably the proudest of my life. I graduated fall semester of 2010 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a minor in Entrepreneurship. The little girl back in 2005 made it to graduation, and I personally never would have thought I could make it through. This story is about how, no matter how challenging college is, or how frustrating, it’s worth sticking with it and making it. That’s what I say to people who are struggling. I’ve been through what college throws at you, and I stuck with it and graduated.

### Melissa Snyder  
**SSS Student**

Six years ago I came to UW with an Associates’ Degree in English from LCCC. I may have lived in Laramie since I was five years old, but I truly knew nothing about the University and how it worked. I was Lost. My fiancé (then boyfriend) told me about SSS and how they might be able to help me with some of the transitions I had to deal with in coming from a community college. Bill Anderson was my advisor in SSS and while I always pushed myself on to graduate, I truly don’t know how I would have done it without SSS, Bill, UDSS, and all of their help. If it weren’t for Bill and SSS I would not have been in contact with Vocational Rehabilitation (who have also been a big help to me), I would not have received the two scholarships that SSS has awarded me, and I never would have been able to go to so many exciting plays and functions over the years. I will never forget the helping hand that SSS has provided me with the last four years and how that help has truly influenced my ability to graduate this December 2010.
By Sandy Straley
The Summit, a UW first year student transition program, helps students learn about college life and expectations and begin the transition from high school to postsecondary identities. SSS participants and staff participated in their own Summit Activity on August 21, 2010. About 30 SSS students and staff traveled to the UW Rec Camp near Centennial and then to the beautiful Snowy Range for an enjoyable day of outdoor activities. Interactive activities helped everyone become acquainted and begin to form a supportive group. After lunch near Lewis Lake, students divided into three groups to meet with their UWYO 1205 instructor and peer mentor. They were given an introduction to the 1205 course, the SSS First Year Experience Seminar, and learned more about their classmates and their instructor who would also be their individual SSS Advisor. The opportunity to obtain answers to their questions about transitioning to college was very helpful. Students who participated in Summit activities felt they had a jumpstart to college and to making connections with other students, plus they had a lot of fun.

Congrats, Graduates!

Congratulations to these SSS Students on their graduation from UW!

Becky Brix, BS Agricultural Business
Angela Brown, BA Psychology
Elizabeth Jackson-Little, BS Biology
Steven Limmer, BA Criminal Justice
Corie Owen, BS Business Administration
Melissa Snyder, BA Art
Amy Suchor, BS Business Administration
Tiffany Newton, BA Humanities/Fine Arts

AFA Adventures

By Katie Ludwin
Advocates for Achievement (AFA), the recognized student organization associated with Student Success Services, had a great semester. We kicked it off with a pizza and ice-cream social in the basement of the library. Students (new and returning) gathered to play Apples to Apples and see what AFA is all about. Many new students joined the group this semester and 10-15 students consistently attended our weekly meetings.

On November 4th, AFA sponsored a Soup Dinner and had wonderful participation by students and staff. We especially appreciated the soup, bread, and dessert donations provided by SEO and other campus staff. The group raised funds (primarily through a dessert auction) to be used to give back to the campus and Laramie communities as well as to help fund AFA events and new t-shirts. AFA started their season of giving by setting up a table in the Union for students on December 2nd. They distributed free test-taking supplies (bubble sheets and exam books) and written materials on test-taking strategies to passing students. They enjoyed helping students get ready for finals and getting the name of the organization out in the campus community.

This semester AFA went belly dancing, played games, put on a fundraising event, and got to know each other better. We would like to recognize the graduation of AFA member, Becky Brix, for her commitment to the group and for her wonderful food contributions! We’ll miss you. We would also like to welcome our new co-advisor, Michael Terry, to the group! New members are always welcome. For information on AFA, please email: Katie Ludwin, kludwin@uwyo.edu or Michael Terry, mterry3@uwyo.edu.

TRiO
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
SSS Students Meet Nutcracker Fairy!

On December 2nd, a group of thirty SSS students and two staff members attended the Nutcracker ballet on campus. Students enjoyed ringing in the holiday season with the familiar music and dance. The University of Wyoming Department of Theatre and Dance produces the Nutcracker every four years and the western-themed costumes and settings are worth the wait. We look forward to hosting more cultural events in the spring semester!

Hello, Goodbye

SSS would like to welcome our newest advisor, Michael Terry. Michael has been working for the past year as the SSS tutor coordinator and made the switch to advisor in November 2010. If you ask him where he’s from, Michael will tell you he’s a military brat and moved around quite a bit growing up. Some of the places he’s lived include Arkansas, Utah, Texas, Illinois, New Mexico, the Philippines, and Germany.

Michael completed a bachelor’s degree in English at the University of Central Arkansas and a master’s degree in American Studies at Utah State University. Because he can’t get enough of school, he’s currently working on a master’s in public administration.

Michael has taught and tutored writing and is very excited to be an SSS advisor. He loves living in Laramie because of its close proximity to beautiful mountains and its friendly people.

While we welcome a new advisor, we also say goodbye to Ken Zajac, who is retiring to “an undisclosed location.” Ken has spent the last ten years as an SSS advisor helping students succeed at UW. We’re grateful for his years of service and wish him well on his retirement. Ken would love to hear from you! You can email him at wyohopper@gmail.com.

Enjoy those Twinkies, Ken!