

Student Support Services



Annual Newsletter Spring 2017 Edition

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GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR



We encourage you to recognize and celebrate our student success, as the Student Support Services Program (SSS) has undeniably experienced another successful year. For the first time in our 32+ year history, SSS participants attained a six year graduation rate of 74 percent, compared to the national average of 59 percent for the 2010 cohort. SSS participants attained a four year graduation rate of 49 percent, compared to the national average 44 percent for the 2012 cohort.

Currently 97 percent of our 220 participants are in good academic standing. Our department continues to focus on the University of South Florida's (USF) preeminence goals and the grant requirements for the Federal Department of Education. SSS partners with various university entities and encourages our students to take advantage of all the resources USF has to offer. SSS student academic performance and student engagement is nothing but exemplary, as demonstrated in the SSS newsletter. We appreciate the support of our partners and hope you enjoy reading our student accomplishments for this year. Graciously, we invite you to share in our successes!

Reba Garth
Director

Student Spotlight: Huntley Sawyers



Huntley Sawyers is from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and is an outstanding young man who was selected as the SSS Spotlight student due to his high-level of involvement in USF campus life. Huntley is majoring in Mass Communications with a concentration in Public Relations. He is pursuing this degree because he plans to attend graduate school in College Student Affairs. He believes effective communication skills with large groups of people will serve him well in his future career.

Huntley has maintained a good GPA at USF while actively engaged in student life. He is the co-founder and Vice President of the newly created Dade Broward Club at USF (DBC). DBC is a social and service based club designed to celebrate the diversity in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties by offering a network and support system for students from South Florida. DBC showcases the various cultural aspects represented in South Florida and also engages in community service projects aimed at helping people from diverse backgrounds. Huntley also currently serves as the Director of Programming for the Residence Hall Association, as the Conference Chair for the Black Student Union, and as a Mentor for the Inter-Cultural Student Leadership Conference. In addition, Huntley is a member of the Mobilizing the Dream committee that is tasked with working with faculty and administration to enhance the black student experience at USF. Huntley also has extensive experience as a volunteer tutor for young children and he is planning the Southeastern Black Unity Conference that he founded as a way to network with other college students throughout the region.

In addition, Huntley was recently elected as the 2017-18 President of the Black Student Union and he hopes to raise the profile and membership of this student organization. Huntley is also a newly inducted member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporated, and he is looking forward to making positive and significant contributions to their brotherhood. All of these activities demonstrate Huntley's commitment to enhancing USF through leadership and service. These experiences are also preparing Huntley for his future career in College Student Affairs, where his goal is to become a Dean of Students at the collegiate level. His experience at USF has greatly affected his career choice because he has discovered that he loves being extremely involved on campus and having influence over programming activities. Huntley sincerely cares about enhancing the college student experience for every student and he looks forward to doing so as a college administrator in the future.

Huntley chose to attend USF because he saw the many resources that are available to him as a student, and he was also impressed with how many accolades and accomplishments the university has achieved in its short history. While already accomplishing so much himself at USF, Huntley hopes to grow into being a great leader and an influential mentor that other students can look up to. Huntley also believes that SSS has had a positive influence in his journey at USF: "SSS has impacted my success at USF in many ways. It has provided me with an environment where I can build great connections and access great academic resources. SSS has also provided me with a family away from home and counselors that go over and beyond their duties to help us be successful."

SSS is proud to spotlight this highly motivated and hardworking student — **congratulations to Huntley Sawyers for accomplishing all of this in his first 2 years at USF and we look forward to seeing more of your achievements!**

Student Success

Congratulations to **Kendyl Muehlenbein** for being selected as a NASPA Undergraduate Fellow! According to their website, “The mission of the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program is to increase the number of historically disenfranchised and underrepresented professionals in student affairs and/or higher education”. Kendyl has also been admitted into the University of Vermont College Student Affairs graduate program, which emphasizes a social justice approach to student affairs. Kendyl currently serves as a USF Ambassador and gives credit to SSS for a positive influence in her life.

We are very proud of your accomplishments, Kendyl!

SSS is proud to share the exciting news that **Hikari Nitta** has been accepted into the Disney College Program (DCP)! DCP participants gain valuable, on-the-job experience while working in Disney parks and resorts and earning college credit. While meeting people from all over the world, Hikari will have the opportunity to network with industry leaders, participate in personal and career development classes, and improve her transferable skills such as problem-solving and effective communication.

We know Hikari will represent USF well at the DCP!

Justin Soriano co-authored a piece titled Crescent Hill: From Protests to Parking Garage. The article is about the Crescent Hill area located near the Marshall Student Center and it’s history as the center of student life on USF’s campus.

SSS is honored to have a published author among our ranks and we invite you to read the entire article [here!](#)



Student Success

The USF strategic plan values diversity of students and a campus life with broad cultural opportunities. SSS is proud to contribute to USF's strategic plan by supporting the success of a diverse group of students. USF has recently been recognized as #1 in Florida and #6 in the nation for Black student success. USF received this recognition for eliminating the graduation gap between Black and White students. Support programs such as SSS have played a role in this institutional success and we encourage you to learn more about this achievement [here!](#)

“Student Support Services has given me the push to go after my dreams, and as a result I will be graduating early. Throughout college, SSS has helped me decide on a major, complete an internship, and is now helping me plan my future. The personal attention I receive from this program has been crucial to my success!”

~Charlene Theogene, Junior, Mass Communications



Huntley Sawyers (back), Lakirah Davis (l), Markayla Leggett (c), and Bryce Senatus (r) participated in the “It’s On Us” anti-sexual assault campaign at USF. They signed a pledge to take personal responsibility to recognize, identify, intervene, and prevent sexual assault. **SSS encourages students to be socially conscious and make positive contributions to campus life and our larger society!**

An Exemplary Student: Ms. Stephy Oge

The Student Support Services (SSS) Program partners with various university entities and encourages all students to collaborate with various university resources. **Stephy Oge** is a perfect example of an outstanding SSS student who has expanded her intellect and network by taking advantage of campus resources. As an English major focusing her studies in professional writing, rhetoric, and technology, Stephy's most recent accomplishment involves her research poster presentation at the 2017 iConference in Wuhan, China. She was afforded the opportunity to meet scholars and researchers from around the world who share a common interest in current information issues. Her research poster explores the intersection between black music and teaching introductory computer science concepts.

Stephy says, "The entire experience was priceless because I was able to get a sneak peek into the world of international research in academia, which was exciting. It was even more exciting because it was the first academic conference I had ever attended." Stephy's international travel was made possible by the generosity and collaboration of the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR), the Honors College, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Office of Undergraduate Studies. Stephy Oge also presented her research poster at the USF OUR Office's 2017 Undergraduate Research and Arts Colloquium.

Stephy's collaboration with various offices at USF does not stop at her conference presentation. Stephy is being formally mentored by faculty member, Dr. Elizabeth Metzger, through the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA). Stephy has also had the opportunity to study abroad through the Honors College to Peru on a two-week service trip. She was recently accepted into both master's programs she applied for here at USF—English and Intelligence Studies. Stephy aspires to continue her graduate education to the highest level exploring areas in rhetoric, intelligence, big data, and the digital divide. As a student in the SSS program due to graduate this summer, Stephy Oge embodies what it means to be a low-income and first generation college student striving to be a success story.



Stephy's ambition and drive is an inspiration to all incoming SSS students and other diverse students across the USF campus!



The Spirit of USF: Leadership & Service

SSS students, Trevonne Thomas (l), Daileen Ramize (c), and Rid Bhuiyan (r) are actively engaged in USF activities and enjoy helping other students get involved, too. In addition to working in New Student Connections, Trevonne is also co-Founder and current President of the Dade Broward Club at USF (DBC); Daileen has held executive offices with the Dominican American Student Association (DASA) and has served as a Green and Gold Guide; and Rid Bhuiyan also works in the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, is an active member of the Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Fraternity, International, and a student member of the USF Faculty Senate. **SSS students are proud, hardworking Bulls!**

CAMPUS QUOTES: How Has SSS helped You Succeed at USF?

Nelson Larzabal Ruiz, Freshmen, Biomedical Sciences: “SSS has been a wonderful experience here at USF. Starting on day 1, the warmth and dedication of the counselors and peer mentors made my transition to the university a very smooth and engaging process. SSS has contributed to my success at USF in many ways, from mandatory counselor meetings, which shape our discipline and interest for progress, to engaging activities, financial aid support, and the feeling of “home” one gets when you walk into a counselor’s office. I can say I feel proud to be part of this program and its endless support.”

Ashley Giron, Freshman, Mechanical Engineering: “SSS has helped me network and make connections with people that made it possible for me to get a job at the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Upward Bound. With having these jobs, it has allowed me to experience so many new things like going to MacDill Air Force Base and listening to Obama’s final address. I’ve also made so many life-long friends, who are now like family to me.”

Phoenix Reynolds, Freshman, Pre-Early Childhood Education: “SSS has provided me with the resources and support needed to succeed here at USF. Personally, if it wasn’t for SSS, I’d probably be in a totally different position mentally and socially.”

Kelly Korpela, Freshman, Pre-Early Childhood Education: “SSS has helped me be successful at USF because they have given me support since the very beginning. Since I entered USF I knew I wanted to be involved. I know if I ever need assistance, Mrs. Garth, Ms. Pinson, Dr. Thomas, and Mr. Williams will drop anything to help me and watch me succeed. So far, since the summer I was strictly only a part of SSS. Since the 2016/2017 school year started, I am working as a Student Assistant in the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement Office, active member in Best Buddies, Peer Adviser Leader for the New Student Connections office. Once fall 2017 comes around I will be a Peer Mentor in the Education Living Learning Community and be enrolled in the College of Education a year early. This is only the beginning to my adventure and I’m glad that I have SSS to support me and watch my dreams come true at USF.”

Ruben Navarro, Freshman, Public Health: “SSS has helped provide the resources and motivation I need to be able to understand and be successful at the University. SSS has provided the guide to being successful by assisting with counseling and giving me the push I need to be determined. SSS has taught me the reason for why I am here; for why I will be successful.”

Oreonna Vil, Sophomore, Pre-Nursing: “SSS has served as a family for me on the USF campus. Being the first in my family to attend college, it often becomes difficult to navigate and continue to succeed on this large campus. With Student Support Services, I know that I always have a team of experienced counselors and staff willing to help my anytime! They are always willing to check-in on their students and also direct us in the right direction for help. They do more than just give us advice, they personally interact, and help us to solve important issues that can be so critical to our success at times. The counselors really know what to do in helping us continue our journey here at USF. Thank you is not enough. The staff is a family to me and I am forever grateful to be a member of their program! .”

Daniel Blasco, Senior, Mechanical Engineering: “Thank you for everything you’ve done. Without all the love and support you guys have offered, as well as the counseling, I do not know if I would have ever made it this far. You will always be in my heart and I will never forget the memories made from my first summer. PS. I think you guys should consider renaming yourself from Student Support Services, to Student Survival Services!”

See video testimonials from SSS students. Click [HERE!](#)



SSS Students are Global Citizens

Maya Forbes is an SSS student majoring in Integrative Animal Biology, with a minor in Cultural Anthropology. During the Summer 2016 semester Maya studied abroad in Costa Rica and studied Latin American culture and Spanish language for 5 weeks. Maya was able to expand her education abroad with assistance from the Global Citizenship General Education Program scholarship. In order to receive the scholarship, Maya completed 15 credits of globally-centered courses, attended 2 globally-centered events per semester, and served 15 hours of community service per semester.



We are proud of Maya for being an adventurous global citizen!

SSS student **Quenten Kadlec** studied abroad in Costa Rica. He enjoyed horseback riding and hiking as he explored this beautiful country. He was also thrilled to experience a new culture and broaden his perspective.



We are proud of Quenten for representing USF as a global citizen!

SSS Students are Successful at USF!

Congratulations to the following SSS students with a USF GPA of 3.0 or above

FRESHMEN

Jesus Aguilar
Macy Bazard
Bedjina Beausejour
Connor Benjamin
Alexandra Betti
Brianna Browne
Victor Bula
Marcella Calabrese
Martina Calabrese
Alicia Campbell
Mohammad Cheema
Christina Cherilus
Shamease Cooper
Shaienne Demerieux
Carla Edouard
Nafisa Emma
Garrett Ferguson
Megan Frederick
Helen Giang
Martaz'Shia Gibbs
Jasmine Gilliard
Ashley Giron

Dakotah Goetz
Manuela Gonzalez
Laura Guilarte-Debras
Peter Guirguis
Amber Hernandez
Emily Hickmon
Ivan Ibarra
Caroline Jeczalik
Max Joseph
Victoria Kennedy
Rayven Kirkland
Kelly Korpela
Nelson Larzabal-Ruiz
Lesther Lee
Boeun Lee
Chrisna Lindor
Adela Lopez
Trevor Lucas
Jeziel Morejon Hernandez
Angela Musto
Maria Musto
Enosh Newby
Van Nguyen

Adefemi Obisanya
Duaa Omari
Amanda Pham
Ayrilyn Pierre
Phoenix Reynolds
Keely Ricketts
Alih Rosa
Stephanie Rozanski
Aryssa Simpson
Jasmine Smalls
Nygil Somwar
Bryson Thompson
Alexandra Vieira
Tracey Vilvert
Jahmari Williams
Khalil Wilson
Melanie Zapata

SOPHOMORES

Donald Aird
Asha Bartholomew
Winesha Blair
Alaina Branford

Marcellus Brookes
Elene Bruno
Paola Calderon
Sarah Carlin
Melissa Chirino
David Cidel
Nastassia Clarke
Nayana Clayton
Andressa Cardoso
Abigail Destin
Melissa Durkin
Joseph Ellis
Angela Ferguson
Amanda Fernandez
Oscar Hernandez
Ritchell Jean-Baptiste
Simone Johnson-Riley
Kayla Jones
Kyrah Joseph
Maria Jozic
Virginia Khavin
Markayla Leggett

“SSS has helped me by providing me a sense of belonging. Coming into this program in the summer helped me build so many relationships, we’re like a family. Also having counselors that are always pushing you to be your best and explore all the things USF has to offer has helped me a lot. Any questions I have I can easily reach out to them and they are always willing to help. The SSS office has also been a great resource for me as well and the SSS computer lab has saved my life many times.”

~Shamease Cooper, Freshman, Pre-Nursing

Congratulations to the following SSS Scholarship Recipients

Connor Benjamin
Javares Black
Alaina Branford

Christina Cherilus
Shaienne Demetrius
Carla Edouard

Carlie Edouard
Ivan Ibarra
Ritchell Jean Baptist

Merly Jean-Louis
Enosh Newby
Corey Walker

Bulls Interns

Lamonica Walkin completed an internship in the Dominican Republic during the fall 2016 semester. Her internship involved teaching English and American culture at the NY Mets Baseball Academy in Boca Chica. To help aspiring Mets players transition to life in the U.S., this language and culture instruction program focused on baseball, travel, customs, food, pop culture, and more. Lamonica had a unique and exciting experience while earning class credit for participating in this program. In the picture above, Lamonica is standing in front of the Christopher Columbus statue in Zona Colonial in Santo Domingo.



Congratulations on completing this unique internship, Lamonica!

Deidra Rogers has been admitted into the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Internship. The internship will take place in Washington, D.C. during summer 2017. According to their website (<http://www.cbcfinc.org/internships/>), this internship “prepares college students to become principled leaders, skilled policy analysts, and informed advocates by exposing them to the processes that develop national policies and implement them – from Capitol Hill to federal field offices.” Deidra plans to attend law school after graduating from USF, so she is looking forward to networking with legislators and leaders working in various government offices. Deidra previously completed the Legislative Internship Program (LIP), an experience which prepared her well for the upcoming internship in D.C.



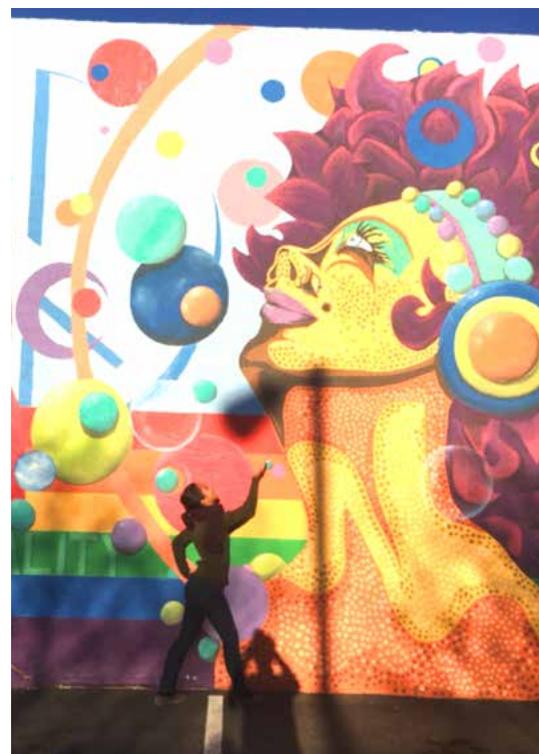
Congratulations on being accepted into this internship program, Deidra!

Bulls Service Break

Rayven Kirkland, Freshman, Public Health: “Even though it was about 40 degrees in Winston-Salem, NC, getting to help build a house for a single mother and her 4 children really warmed my heart.”

Alexandra Pellot, Sophomore, Psychology: “Our week consisted of workshops and training’s to introduce us to the work Campus Pride is doing here in Charlotte, NC and across the country. Once we were trained we got to work. We were divided into groups working on an organization strategic review project, auction preparation, and social media research. Throughout the week, we were visited by local LGBTQ community leaders who taught us about gender identity, activism in the wake of HB2, queer history, and advocating for sexual health. We also visited the Campus Pride office to learn more about working for a non-profit organization. We stayed up late to watch documentaries like The Trans List and even saw a drag show. This trip was an eye opening journey on how we, together can create more inclusive spaces on campus and within our community.”

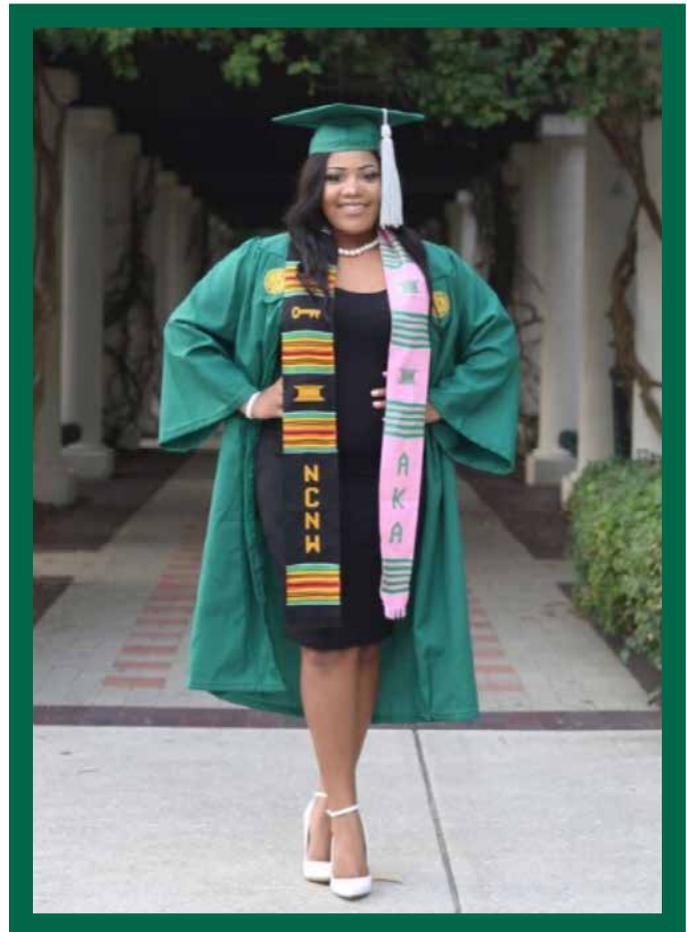
Adela Lopez, Freshman, Pre-Marketing: “This year I had the tremendous privilege of being a part of Bulls Service Break with the topic on Immigration. Heading to Texas I had a broad idea of what we were going to do. I have always been really aware with most things that had to do with immigration since it is a topic that hit really close to home. We went to learn more about it and lend a hand in any way we can. On our first day we drove to LUPE at San Juan a neighboring city. We helped clean up the classroom around LUPE, which is a place that many undocumented families go to for support from legal to helping them prepare for their citizens or DACA or Residency paper work. That same day, our facilitator Mary, took us to see the border for our first time. Being at the border we learned her personal story and struggles to be in the United States, it was a very powerful moment. It was sad to know that the only people helping out these families are foundations like LUPE who fight for their rights every day. More than me making an impact in Texas, I truly feel like Texas made a bigger impact on me. I would most definitely recommend this trip to anyone who is thinking about it. It will open your eyes and change you as a person.”



Congratulations to the 2016 SSS Grads!

Michelle Almonor, *Communication*
Alexia Anagnostakis, *Social Work*
Therlandia Bachard, *Mass Communications*
Jakirah Baisden, *Sociology*
Jeannie Busscher, *Inter. Social Sciences*
Catiana Charles, *Public Health*
Taylor Collier, *Public Health*
Shadari Crawford, *International Studies*
Danielle Delaine, *Social Work*
Sthephany Delgado, *Mass Communications*
Nigel Dooling, *Physical Education*
Adrienne Edwards, *Finance*
Myrla Exume, *Health Sciences*
Brandon Fersten, *Political Science*
Lisbet Flores, *Public Health*
Ja'Ron Hammond, *Health Sciences*
Reign Hervey, *Sociology*
Samantha Holland, *Inter. Social Sciences*
Paul Jean-Louis, *Mass Communications*
Zoe Jenkins, *Health Sciences*
Wail Jihadi, *International Studies*
Shernide Joseph, *Elementary Education*
Sandra Jozic, *Mass Communications*
Jonathan Kammeier, *Management*
Ryan Kelly, *German*
Janeen King, *Health Sciences*
Lorry King, *Public Health*
Alvin Kirkland, *Sociology*
Imani Lee, *Mass Communications*
Alexandria Lindsay, *Communication Sciences & Disorders*
Alan Lopez, *Psychology*
Sairam Maddukuri, *Biomedical Sciences*
Rebeca Marin, *Public Health*
Rada Mckinnon, *Psychology*
Melanie Medrano, *Psychology*
Andherson Mendoza, *Accounting*
Elizabeth Miller, *Public Health*
Navline Narcisse, *Health Sciences*
Thuy Nguyen, *Biomedical Sciences*
Marquetha Parker, *Social Work*
Jeanine Patrick, *Studio Art*
Raquel Pioquinto Pena, *Criminology*
Leon Riley, *English*
Hillary Roberts, *Public Health*
Daniel Rodriguez, *Music Education*
Luis Sanabria, *Mathematics*
Waleska Santiago-Datil, *Public Health*

Maxwell Schmidt, *Finance*
Randy Schutt, *Marketing*
Joshua Spence, *Economics*
Lauren Sullivan, *Political Science*
Nikeya Tarver, *Marketing*
Olubusola Teniola, *Health Sciences*
Dominique Timothee, *Behavioral Healthcare*
Althea Tyrell, *Mass Communications*
Brandon Vega, *Public Health*
James Warmington, *English*
Ethan Wilson, *Mechanical Engineering*
Caine Wilson, *Health Sciences*

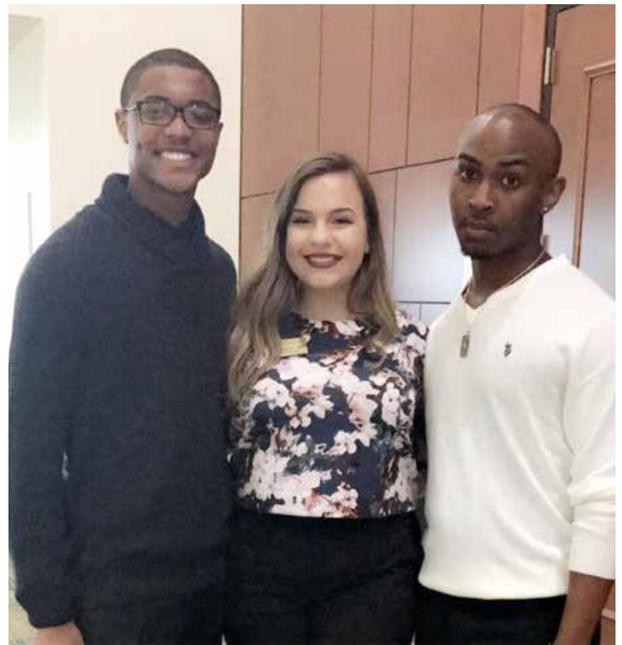


Rada McKinnon is currently enrolled in the Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program at USF

SSS Promotes

Campus Involvement

SSS freshman students, **Bryson Thompson** (l), **Melanie Perez** (c), and **Khalil Wilson** (r) are actively involved in campus life and attend many events to support USF. Bryson and Melanie work for the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Khalil has been selected to work as an SSS Peer Coach during summer 2017, where he will serve as a mentor to the incoming freshmen students. Stay engaged in campus life young Bulls!



SSS Promotes

Service Organizations and Activities

SSS freshman students, **Ayrillyn Pierre** (l) and **Martaz'Shia Gibbs** (r), are actively engaged in campus life. They are both new members of the National Council of Negro Woman (NCNW) and have participated in numerous volunteer opportunities, such as USF's Stampede of Service. Martaz'Shia was recently elected as an SG Senator for the College of Arts & Sciences and also won the Miss Black & Gold Pageant. Ayrillyn participated in the Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI), served on Martaz'Shia's SG campaign, and is planning to run for SG office herself next semester. ***Future leaders at USF!***

College Success Workshops

SSS workshops are designed to give students important information to help them be successful at USF and in life. These workshops cover topics such as:

- How to drop/add for classes using OASIS
- College major exploration and career decision
- Embracing diverse perspectives in a global world
- The benefits of undergraduate research
- The benefits of living on-campus and joining campus organizations
- How to read a DegreeWorks report and calculate a college GPA
- Tips for college success, including non-cognitive factors (i.e. time and stress management, study and test-taking skills)
- Financial aid and scholarship information, (i.e. how and when to complete a FAFSA, Bright Futures renewal criteria)
- Preparing for graduate or professional school



Thank you to the USF partners who contribute to the success of SSS students in a variety of ways!

- Academic Success Center
- Black Faculty & Staff Association
- Campus Recreation
- Career Services
- Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement
- Center for Student Involvement
- Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention
- Education Abroad
- Financial Education & Outreach Program
- Housing & Residential Education
- New Student Connections
- Office of Admissions
- Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity
- Office of Graduate Studies
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Office of Orientation
- Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities
- Office of Undergraduate Research
- Student Health Services
- Students with Disabilities Services
- The USF Counseling Center
- University Scholarships & Financial Aid Services
- USF Dining Services
- Wellness Education

Meet the Student Support Services Staff

- **Reba Garth**, Director
- **Dr. LaTosha Thomas**, Assistant Director
- **Roshanda Pinson**, Counselor/Advisor
- **Brian Williams**, Counselor/Advisor
- **Eirleene Bristow**, Administrative Specialist
 - **Jayson Blunt**, Graduate Assistant
- **Stephy Oge**, Summer Program Coordinator

- Peer Coaches:

Ashley Giron, Trevonne Thomas, Janessa Toledo, Khalil Wilson

- Office Assistants:

Courtney Alleyne, Joshua Beck, Alexia Knight, Markayla Leggett





**Student Support Services
Student Affairs & Student Success**

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