

Golden Bear Ready!

WVU Tech Student Support Services

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SSS Staff

Student Support Services Program at Tech Receives \$1.7 Million in U.S. Department of Education Funding

via WVU Tech University Relations

West Virginia University Institute of Technology is pleased to announce that the federal Student Support Services (SSS) TRiO program housed within the University – one of the oldest such programs in the nation – received a grant award totaling \$1.7 million from the U.S. Department of Education.

The SSS program has been operating on WVU Tech's campus since 1971 and offers first-generation, low-income and disabled students services designed to help them on their path to completing a degree. The program accomplishes this with a suite of tutoring services, access to computer labs, printing services, financial literacy seminars, academic advisement, scholarships and outside cultural experiences.

The funding, which will be awarded in annual increments of \$343,138, will allow the program to serve its 215 annual students for the next five years. Scott Robertson, Director of the SSS program at WVU Tech, said that the award is a chance for the program to grow in scope.

"We're going to continue offering the tutoring and other programming that our students find so valuable," he said. "Through this grant, we'll also be able to try new strategies and new ideas to increase retention and completion rates. We'll be able to enhance the experience that is already working so well for so many of our students."

Robertson said that one such expansion will be the addition of peer mentors: student workers who will be assigned to first-generation students enrolled in the SSS program. "These new student mentors will participate in programming initiatives and workshops with program students. They'll encourage them in their coursework, attend cultural events with them and serve as role models," said Robertson.

The program will also use the funding to add a Student Success Advisor position, boosting the SSS staff at WVU Tech to five full-time employees.

Securing funding for SSS programs is intensely competitive, and the grant writing process for Robertson's team started back in September 2014. Robertson attributes the success of the program's grant request to his students' desire to overcome setbacks and see their college experience through.

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Scott Robertson, Director
sdrobertson@mail.wvu.edu



Kitty Palausky, Student Success Advisor
kitty.palausky@mail.wvu.edu



Jeanette Vara, Student Success Advisor
jeanette.vara@mail.wvu.edu



Phil Redden,
Academic Support Coordinator
phillip.redden@mail.wvu.edu



Rita Huddleston,
Program Coordinator
rita.huddleston@mail.wvu.edu

“The hard work of our staff, the hours our tutors put into helping their peers reach their goals and the sheer drive of our students to complete their degrees shows that what is being done here at WVU Tech is working,” he said.

Statistics tell the same story. In this year’s report to the U.S. Department of Education, WVU Tech’s SSS program marked a persistence rate of 90% with 92% of students in good academic standing. The program was funded with 65% in mind for both those figures.

“WVU Tech’s support of this kind of programming shows a real desire among the University’s faculty, staff and administration to see students succeed in and outside of the classroom,” said Robertson.

“This program plays an important role in the University’s retention efforts and it’s a part of the campus culture of student success that our dedicated faculty and staff have created to help our students navigate their unique educational paths,” said Richard Carpinelli, WVU Tech Dean of Students.



SSS staff and program participants attended a presentation by Bill Nye the Science Guy presented by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission on November 19th at the Clay Center in Charleston, WV.

The Life of a Student Athlete

By Hunter Moles, SSS Peer Mentor

The balance of what you do with your time in life is key no matter what. Being a college student, time management is crucial. Playing a sport while taking classes takes it to a whole other level. Always being rushed, having something to do, and always tired is what it consist of. Here goes an average day in my world as a men’s soccer player at WVU Tech: I love to sleep, so I get up at about 9:40am to get ready for my first class at 10:00am. I get out of class at 10:50am, and head straight to work. I am privileged to work as a peer mentor in the Student Support Services. I work from 11:00am to 1:30pm. During this time I do whatever is needed in the lab at Student Support Services, and if I have any free time, I try to work on my homework and online classes.

Once I get off work I head straight to everyone’s favorite place to eat, the Bears Den. I grab a quick lunch and head to my class at 2:00pm. Once I get out of class at 2:50pm I go back to work from 3:00pm to 4:30pm. I try to get as much homework done as possible because I know I won’t have much time later. Once I am off work at 4:30, I go back to the café to get a to-go box to have some food for after practice. I go to my room right after that around 4:45 to 5:00pm, throw my stuff down, and grab my soccer stuff and go right back out the door. Our team has to be in the locker room by 5:30pm, and I need to go into the training room to get anything I need for my body to be prepared for practice. We meet in the locker room until around 6:00pm and go up to the field to start practice.

Hopefully coach is in a good mood, and lets us out of practice around 8:00pm. I then may go to the training room for an ice bath, or other treatment for my body. Once I get back to my room and take a shower and eat, it’s around 9:30pm (on a good night). Depending on if I have homework or a test the next day, I start on some school work. The balance of doing my school work, while being tired, and wanting to hang out with my friends is the hardest part at this time. I try to get in to bed by midnight, though sometimes it is later. This is a day in my life at Tech, it does not mention the trips to away games, and missing classes. Making up assignments and tests is a regular thing for me. The stress of balancing my grades, sports, and social life gets to me at times. In the future I will look back on this time of my life and enjoy the memories. I can’t lie; it’s tough, but I wouldn’t change it for anything else.



You're Not Alone

by Lesli Taylor, SSS Peer Mentor

Having a mental illness such as depression is like living in an eternal thunderstorm. During the storm there are lulls where the drizzle is light and the skies are only a light gray with hints of sunshine peeking through. When the storm picks up, the sky turns black. The wind blows and the rain smacks you in the face so hard it stings. No umbrella can guard you, the rain seems to find its way inside your shoes, and your clothes are soaked. The lulls are the good days when you live with mental illness. The world doesn't seem so bad, and even though the sky is still never completely sunny you are able to have faith that it will shine one day. Bad days are when the storm really picks up. It can feel like no matter what you do the rain will never stop and you'll never see sunlight again.

If you believe that you may be suffering from a mental illness I urge you to seek help. There is no shame in saying that you need help, and it takes real strength to open up about your problems. Talk to a medical professional and see what services may be available for you. Treatment is not just about taking medication, as there are therapies and lifestyle changes that may help you to better manage the disorder.



#TRIOWorks

by Jordan Acree, SSS Peer Mentor



At the beginning of my freshman year of college I was struggling with my math class and really needed help. I soon found the Student Support Service (TRIO) Office to seek help. After talking with the staff,

I was placed with a great Math Tutor who helped me to be successful in my math class. I was also struggling with how to manage my time with school, work, and my personal life; until I attended a workshop during the spring semester of my freshman year on Time Management. From that workshop, I learned how to manage my time more effectively. Along with the academic help, the SSS program has also assisted me financially by giving me the opportunity to work as a Peer Mentor.

As a Peer Mentor I can share my experiences and give advice about different classes and study techniques from personal experiences. When sharing my experiences, I hope to encourage other students who may have the same struggles that I had when starting to college, and let other students know that they are not alone. When they are struggling with a class or maybe a personal issue outside of school, because there are other students that are going through the same thing. Not only does TRIO offer academic and financial help, they also provide a great environment for students to come and hangout, talk with staff, and just take a break between their classes. I take advantage of that opportunity everyday.

Three Rivers Avian Center

The Student Support Services (SSS) program partnered with WVU Tech Hall Council and the Biology Club to bring the Three Rivers Avian Center to campus for an educational presentation on November 12th. To learn more about the center, check out their website: www.trawv.org.



Photos courtesy of WVU Tech University Relations.

WVU Tech Dean's List

The following students earned a 3.25 grade point average (GPA) or higher during the Fall 2015 semester in their respective coursework. We are very proud of their accomplishments!

Jordan Acree	Kelsey Frank	Melissa Landers	Nikiyah Simpson
Lawrence Allphin	Victor Garcia*	Gio Lins*	Dakota Smith
Jonathon Boarman	Hunter Gray	Jacob Lovejoy	Samuel Stone
Megan Blythe	Daniel Grimm*	Olivia Mantohbang	Scotty Stone
Kaylah Bovard	Allison Hall	Andrew McGrady	Richard Sutphin
Jordan Bowen*	Brandon Hamilton	Allison Morris	Lesli Taylor
Tori Bragg*	Marissa Hare	Amy Morris	Adam Teator
Ashley Burns	Katelyn Horrocks	Nathaniel Nottingham	Teresa Tincher
Cai Carena	William Hughes	Vicente Porcar	Genna Trippett
Jackie Carroll	Geneva Hutchison	Liz Pressman	Salvador Valencia
Morgan Church	Tavon Johnson	James Pritt	James Waldeck
Kelley Coleman*	Robert Jones*	James Ramsey	Brianna Whaley*
Nathaniel Earl	Shella Kelley	Rachel Rusch	Sarah Whitley*
Daniel Falsafi	Josh Kinsel	Aaliyah Sears	Shannon Wiercioch
Joseph Ferguson	Joel Kouakou	Sierra Seay*	Astewaye Zedewede

*Denotes 4.0GPA

Co-Oping: In My Own Words

By Matt Hayes, Peer Mentor



Pulling in for the first time I could feel my whole body start to cringe, opening the car door and looking behind me, all I could see was rolling smoke on that misty morning. Trembling as I got closer to the front gate there were two people in yellow trench coats to welcome myself and four others who looked just as nervous as I was. We all exchanged greeting with a half grin look on our faces trying to pull off that we all belonged to be a part of this company that has been here for generations. That first day was the most terrifying day I have had on the plant.

Since then, I have worked for DuPont-Chemours for almost two years now and love my job and what I do since that first day on the plant. Before I took this job I had no idea what to expect when I graduate from college. Now I feel like I will be very successful because of this company and how they all have treated and taken me under their wing on different projects and opportunities they have given me to take lead on.

If it wasn't for me taking the Co-Op position with DuPont-Chemours, I would probably have switched my major. They brought back the passion that I felt when I first decided to become an Electrical Engineer and that I had lost until that first day I stepped on the plant. It has given that extra drive to want to finish school and become that Electrical Engineer that I wanted to be when I decided my major.

SSS Fall and Winter Athletes

In addition to their coursework, the following SSS participants represent WVU Tech in athletic competition.

Men's Basketball

Brandon Hamilton
Ra'Shaud Kincaid
Hunter Moles

Women's Basketball

Emily Brown
Courtney Fisher
Alexandria Humphreys

Cross Country

Brianne Cantley
Cai Carena
Zechariah Faw
Gjenine Galloway
Atiyyah Herron
Channa Hoskins
Isi Ibarra
Robert Jones
Kylie Lang
Allison Morris
Sierra Seay

Golf

Blake Burgess
Nathaniel Earl
John Reges

Men's Soccer

Roman Cruz
Victor Garcia
Joel Kouakou
Mark Magallanes
Wade McComas
Hunter Moles
Taofik Mudasiru

Men's Soccer

Mohamed Noufal
James Ramsey
Frenando Rivero
Francisco Rocha
Salvador Valencia

Women's Soccer

Angelica Arellano
Chloe Gillespie
Olivia Mantohbang
Samantha McClure
Sydney Schaeffer
Shelby Swiney
Brittany Torres

Swimming

Rubhi Garcia Mercado
Jacob Marshall
Shannon Wiercioch

Volleyball

Brandi Cisco
Jacqueline Carroll
Jaymee Hannan
Brianna Whaley

Wrestling

Tristan Bean
Jonathan Boarman
Jephte Jeanpaul
Brannon King
Giovane Lins
Robert Pritt
Colton Rowe

From the Desk of.....

Greeting Golden Bears,

I'm Jeanette Vara and I'm excited to become a member of WVU Tech's Student Support Services! I joined SSS this December and will serve participants as a Student Success Advisor. In this role I will conduct one-on-one advising meetings, facilitate workshops, monitor academic progress, and help students prepare for graduate school admissions.

For the last six years WVU Tech has become a second home to me. I have previously represented the University as an Admissions Counselor and worked with students as a Developmental Advising Specialist. I have my M.A. in Higher Education Administration, a B.S.B.Ad. in Marketing, and a B.A. in Foreign Languages from West Virginia University. In my free time I enjoy traveling, going to the movies, playing disc golf, watching sports, and cooking.

I'm familiar with higher education and I'm looking forward to helping you navigate your way to a Bachelor's degree! My advice to you is to become acquainted with your new environment; join a student group-or two and network with your professors. Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourself. My favorite quote on success is from John D. Rockefeller, "I do not think that there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature." Good luck on your studies and don't forget I'm here to assist you along the way.

Respectfully,
Jeanette

To stay up to date on what is going on in the SSS office, make sure you follow us online!

#TRIOWorks

by Kimberly Rush, SSS Peer Mentor



Being a first generation college student, I have learned many things about who I am and what I really want to do with my life. One of the things that has helped me get started on my college career and my life journey, is Student Support Services. I joined the program my first semester of college and have been an active participant in it for a year and a half. SSS provides a welcoming community, and all the help that I need to fully succeed. They provide free tutoring, printing, counseling, and mentoring.

Not only has SSS helped me in all of these ways, they have given me the opportunity and experience of working with them one on one. If I have any type of problem the staff are always there and ready to listen. I was highly overwhelmed with coming to college, my parents did not go to college and I was in a new place and hardly knew anyone. Being an active participant in SSS has allowed me to meet new people and become more open to the possibilities of being a college student. Coming from a small town and succeeding in college can be a bit hard, but with the help of SSS I was able to overcome the fear of failing because of my background and where I came from. SSS has helped me succeed in more ways than one by making sure that I had everything that I needed to become a successful college student.



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To get text messages from the SSS Program, text @techsss15 to 81010.

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