



**Student Support Services
(SSS)
Student Handbook**

The College of St. Scholastica



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Welcome to Student Support Services!

The Student Support Services (SSS) staff and I are excited that you have chosen to be a part of our program! We work hard to provide quality services to our students and strive to offer a place where students are respected and valued for their individuality. This program is a great way to connect with The College and find the support that you may need.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to assist you in meeting your educational goals. The most important thing you can do is to let us know when you need help. Once you are accepted into the SSS program, you are assigned a counselor. I encourage you to develop a relationship with this individual and keep in contact. We are only able to provide support if we know that you need help. Do not hesitate to call, e-mail us, or stop by and set up an appointment. That's what we are here for! On the next page is a list of the SSS staff, contact information, and hours of operation.

This handbook was created as an easy reference to SSS information. Please take some time to look it over and become familiar with our services and policies.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Once again, welcome to SSS and please know that we are all looking forward to assisting you with a successful college experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dory Pohl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dory Pohl, Director
Student Support Services

SSS Office Hours and Contact Information

Hours of Operation

8 AM-4:30 PM Monday-Friday

The office is closed for one week in December. Check with the SSS office for specific dates.

Loft Information

T2129

723-6746

Contact Information

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History of SSS/TRiO

Student Support Services is a federally-funded TRiO Program. TRiO is a collection of educational opportunity programs funded by the United States Department of Education. "In 1965, Congress began creating a series of programs to help Americans overcome class and social barriers to higher education. These services, geared towards low-income and first generation students, were called Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds. Today they are known as the Federal TRiO Programs. Congress initially authorized most of the programs in the Higher Education Act of 1965 and subsequent amendments. After their authorization, Congress appropriated money for the programs". (Do You Know TRiO? A TRiO History Fact Sheet, www.trioprograms/clearinghouse)

Our Project serves 175 students who meet the admission criteria set forth by the Department of Education; low income and/or first generation and/or having a physical or learning disability and having academic need.

There are several other TRiO programs funded through the United States Department of Education. They include Upward Bound - a program that assists low-income, potential first-generation high school students in preparing for college; Talent Search - a program that provides information to students in grades 6-12 about college preparation; Educational Opportunity Centers - a program that provides school re-entry assistance to students who have dropped out; and McNair Scholars - a program providing assistance to college students planning to attend graduate school. The College of St. Scholastica hosts five TRiO programs: Student Support Services, McNair Scholars, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, and Educational Talent Search.

General Information

Confidentiality

Students sign an informed consent when entering SSS. Student Services adhere to state laws and ethical standards that require that all information is held confidential. To provide effective service, professional staff may discuss your case in a confidential setting. Student Services counselors may consult with one another when it is deemed helpful for the student. Confidential client information will be disclosed to others outside Student Services only with your written consent or in accordance with state law and college policy. State law requires Student Services to report certain situations, such as suspicion of child or elder abuse, or serious danger to self or others. At times, insurance companies are given information in order to obtain third party reimbursement from the insurance company. The carrier of the insurance (i.e. student's parents) will receive an explanation of benefits from the insurance company following the filing of an insurance claim. This will be done only with your permission. Other exceptions to confidentiality include:

1. If you are involved in certain types of civil or criminal proceedings, we may be required by court subpoena to release records and/or have staff testify.
2. If you were referred to the Student Services through a faculty/staff concern we may need to disclose or obtain information to/from faculty and/or staff as deemed appropriate by Student Services staff.
3. E-mail is not considered a secure or confidential medium.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are risks and benefits that may occur in counseling. Counseling may involve the risk of remembering unpleasant events and may arouse strong feelings. The benefits from counseling may be an increased ability to cope with friends, family relationships, and academic pressures. You may also gain a better understanding of yourself that will assist your personal development.

RECORDS

A confidential counseling record is maintained with access restricted to counseling staff, except for situations where medical and counseling staff are jointly involved with ongoing treatment. Medications are noted in both the medical and counseling files.

If you have questions about our confidentiality policies, please feel free to ask staff. We also invite you, if you have concerns about the services you are provided, to address these with the Dean of Students.

Criteria for Acceptance into SSS

Students who are accepted into SSS must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a first-generation college student (neither parent has a bachelor's degree) and/or
2. Meet income guidelines (determined each year by the U.S. Department of Education) and/or
3. Do you have a diagnosed physical or mental impairment that substantially limits your ability to participate in the educational experience and opportunities offered at CSS and
4. Have academic need

At least sixty-seven percent (67%) of students must be both first-generation AND meet income guidelines OR be a student with a disability. At least thirty-three percent (33%) of the students with disabilities must also meet the income guidelines.

All students in SSS must be United States citizens or permanent residents.

To document first-generation status, students will be asked to indicate their parents' highest educational attainment on their application.

Students are asked to document their disability status when necessary. SSS staff will send a form to the Disability Resource Center for verification of accommodations. A student may be asked to sign a release of information form allowing exchange of information between SSS and the Disability Resource Center.

Project Waiting List

Students who meet the criteria for acceptance will be placed on a waiting list if SSS is full, and invited into SSS as other participants graduate or leave SSS for other reasons. *Because SSS must maintain specific percentages of students who meet first-generation, income, or disability criteria, students may not enter SSS in the same order they are placed on the waiting list.*

Occasionally, SSS staff may place a student on a waiting list to gather more information. Full-time students may receive priority over part-time students.

Readmit Policy

Students will need to reapply to the SSS program if they have left the college and/or were exited from SSS or dismissed. Denial Policy applies to readmit students and new students.

Denial to SSS

SSS staff does reserve the right to deny admission to SSS even if the student (new and readmit students) meets the criteria for admission. Reasons for possible denial to SSS may include:

- Student has a history of very poor academic performance
- Student has erratic enrollment patterns
- Student withdraws for a semester
- Student is disrespectful/abusive toward SSS staff or other students
- Student shows consistent part-time enrollment
- Student has no desire to seek a degree
- Student already has achieved a bachelor's degree
- Student has a poor disciplinary record on campus

Dismissal from SSS

Admitted SSS students may be removed from the program for the following reasons:

- Disrespectful or abusive behavior toward SSS staff or other students
- Deciding not to pursue a degree
- Ceasing communication with their SSS counselor, failing to return calls, or not responding to other repeated attempts at contact
- Having disciplinary problems on campus
- Failing to attend mandatory meetings
- Failing to meet with their SSS counselor while on probation
- Dropping out of school for more than one semester
- History of very poor academic performance or erratic enrollment patterns

Assessment

Before students enter SSS, they will be asked to take the Learning Styles Assessment and fill out the SSS Action Plan along with several check lists. Results from these assessments will be used to:

- Assist the student in the selection of a college major and career focus
- Assist with study strategies
- Monitor goals

Mandatory Meetings

SSS students are required to attend at least **two** meetings with their SSS counselor each semester. Reminders via email and regular mail will be sent to students at the beginning of the semester and/or at midterm.

Mid-Term Grade Checks

The SSS office receives mid-term reports on students from the Academic Advising office and through direct mailings from your professors in the fall, and spring semesters. *These are not official grades and do not appear on the students' final transcripts.* Mid-term grade checks are used to monitor progress in classes and help identify students who are struggling academically so that tutoring or other assistance can be provided.

SSS shares a list of SSS students with the academic advising office so mid term grades can be shared with SSS staff. Only names are shared. Access to your grades helps SSS staff monitor your academic progress and also check to see if you are meeting your academic goals.

Change of Information

It is very important for the SSS Office to have students' correct contact information. Students who change mailing addresses, phone numbers, last names etc. need to contact the SSS office immediately so that we may make the appropriate changes in our database.

SSS Website

Students are encouraged to visit the SSS website for general information, upcoming events, and information about other services and programs. The address is www.css.edu/Administration/Student-Support-Services---TRiO.html.

Becoming a TRIO Alumni

Upon Graduation you will become a **TRIO Alumni**. There are millions of TRIO alumni just like you working in education, business, marketing, computer systems, healthcare, etc.

We want to make sure that you know you are a TRIO alumni and how to stay involved in the work TRIO does.

- Connect to the CSS/SSS Alumni registry. Go to <http://www2.css.edu/app/alumni/directory/Searchdir.shtml> and click on "Update your Alumni Record". **Make sure to check that you participated in Student Support Services.** Indicate whether or not you would like to receive our newsletter.
- While you are on the CSS Alumni page, register with the Alumni career network <http://www2.css.edu/app/alumni/career/index.cfm>
- We encourage you also to go to www.coenet.us website to learn how to be an active TRIO alumni.

SSS Services

Career Counseling

Students may make an appointment with a SSS counselor to discuss major/career options including taking the Campbell Interest and Skill Survey, resume and cover letter writing and interviewing skills.

Personal Counseling

SSS students may make an appointment with their SSS counselor to talk about personal issues. Common issues students face include: adjusting to college, stress management, depression, balancing school, work, and family, and relationship problems. All issues discussed in counseling are kept strictly confidential. SSS counselors also have a wide network of local referral sources for students needing additional services. All the SSS counselors are licensed social workers or counselors.

Academic Counseling

Students have the opportunity to work with counselors on course selection, study skills, time management, learning strategies and much more. We offer students a daily planner at the beginning of each semester. In addition, Master Workbook sessions are offered at the beginning of each semester to help students organize class material.

Tutoring Services

FREE one on one tutoring is available for SSS Students who are not able to access CAS tutoring services. Students need to work with their SSS counselor to request tutoring services.

SSS students need to request a tutor through their SSS counselor. The SSS counselor will then forward the request to the tutor coordinator. The tutor coordinator will assign the SSS student to a tutor. That tutor will contact the student via e-mail (unless otherwise specified) to set up an initial meeting. At the initial meeting, the SSS student and tutor discuss meeting times, locations, frequency, etc.

The SSS student will be asked to agree to the following expectations:

1. I will make every effort to work with the tutor in a timely manner on setting up a time and place to meet. If I

- decide that I do not want to meet with the tutor, I will let the tutor and my SSS counselor know ASAP.
2. I must contact my tutor 24 hours in advance if I am unable to attend a tutoring session.
 3. I understand that if I miss 2 scheduled tutoring sessions, I will not receive further assistance for that subject through the SSS Tutor Program.
 4. I will let the tutor know when I no longer need their services and fill out a Tutor Program evaluation.

If the SSS student needs to cancel a tutoring appointment, he/she should call or e-mail the tutor directly.

SSS Mentoring

SSS Mentors can offer you the “student perspective” of your field of study, adjustment to college, social connections (clubs, activities, etc.) among other activities. SSS Mentors are SSS Students that have been active in the SSS program and act as ambassadors of the SSS mission.

To request a meeting with a mentor, please talk with your SSS Counselor.

Equipment/Book Loan Program

SSS has several books, TI-86 graphing calculators and audio cassette recorders available for students to check out. The cassette recorders and calculators can be checked out for up to one semester at a time.

SSS has laptop computers that students can check out for a few days at a time. These laptops are checked out on a first come first serve basis.

Students will be asked to complete an Equipment Loan Agreement before any equipment can be checked out. *If equipment is not returned on time, the SSS Director reserves the right to enforce monetary consequences.*

Students are responsible for all damages to any equipment they check out.

Loft

The “Loft” has 24 hour access. SSS has provided a study environment for SSS students by furnishing the room with desk top computers, typewriter, T.V. and VCR, blackboard, comfortable furniture, and other academic resources. Please be respectful of the equipment and noise level in the Loft.

Grant Aid

SSS is allowed to offer grant aid to eligible SSS students who are in their 1st or 2nd year of college and also receive the Federal PELL Grant. Regulations for disbursement of this aid are made by the Department of Education. As grant aid becomes available, students will be notified by the SSS staff about the application process.

Students who appear to be eligible for grant aid will be sent an application. Grant aid is a competitive process. Filling out an application does not guarantee the awarding of grant aid. The number of students receiving grant aid varies each year. Prior college credits in high school can affect grant aid eligibility.

Students who are awarded aid need to attend spring semester and will have their aid added to their spring semester financial aid award. Students chosen to be awarded grant aid may have additional responsibilities in relation to being awarded the grant aid.

Graduate School Preparation

For SSS students planning to go to graduate school, SSS staff will assist them in completing applications, preparing for testing, and securing financial aid. **SSS also offers graduate school visits throughout the year.**

SSS students applying for a CSS graduate program can receive up to one \$50 application fee waiver. This fee waiver needs to be requested by the student.

SSS offers **Free** graduate school visits periodically throughout the year. Students will receive announcements about these visits.

Scholarship Search

SSS counselors are available to assist students in scholarship searches. SSS counselors will help students organize their scholarship search, provide scholarship search engines, help with essay and personal statement writing, resume building, and mailing of scholarships. SSS does not find nor secure scholarships for students.

Transcripts

SSS students are eligible for at least one free transcript from the registrar's office. Coordination needs to be done with the student's SSS counselor.

Cultural Events

Students may have an opportunity to attend an area cultural event or conference with SSS. SSS will pay for all transportation and admission tickets. SSS cannot transport or pay for participants other than SSS students.

Other Programming

SSS students should check their e-mail and CSS box for announcements on other programming not mentioned in this handbook.