



Student Support Services 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 coach. 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 Kempf". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dory Kempf
Student Support Services
Director

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

Contact Information

Student Support Services
The College of St. Scholastica
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Tweet us @CSSTRIOSSS

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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. Do You Know TRIO? A TRIO History Fact Sheet, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001616015/>.

The College of St. Scholastica SSS program is 100% federally funded TRIO Program sponsored by the US Department of Education (\$300,630 annually). Our SSS program services 175 eligible students annually.

There are several 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; Upward Bound Math/Science- a program that prepares high school students for programs in college that lead to careers in math and science; Talent Search - a program that provides information to students in grades 6-12 about college preparation; Student Support Services - a program that helps low income, first generation and students with disabilities graduate from college; Educational Opportunity Centers - a program that provides school re-entry assistance to students who have dropped out; Veterans Upward Bound- a program that helps veterans make the transition to post secondary education; 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

SSS Mission Statement

Student Support Services (SSS), a TRIO program, contributes to The College of St. Scholastica's mission to provide intellectual and moral preparation for responsible living and meaningful work by providing a collaborative and supportive environment inclusive of diverse backgrounds and learning styles. SSS advocates for the needs of low income and first generation students and student with disabilities in their pursuit of an undergraduate degree.

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. Have a diagnosed disability 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 about their parents' educational attainment on their application.

Students are asked to document their disability status when necessary. If registered with the Center for Equal Access (CEA), SSS staff will send a form to the CEA for verification of disability. A student may be asked to sign a release of information form allowing exchange of information between SSS and the CEA.

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. The 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 coach while on probation
- Dropping out of school for more than one semester
- History of very poor academic performance or erratic enrollment patterns

Assessment

After students are accepted to SSS, they will be asked to complete a series of assessments. Results from these assessments will be used to:

- Determine student needs

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

SSS Staff may recommend additional assessments such as the LASSI, Strengths and Strong Interest survey to assess learning and career choice.

Mandatory Meetings/Services

SSS students are required to meet with their coach and be actively engaged. Reminders for meetings will be sent via email and regular mail to students throughout the year.

Academic Progress Report

The SSS office has access to Academic Progress Reports from the Academic Advising office. *A list of SSS students may be given to Academic Advisement to help SSS track student progress.* APR 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.

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/ssc.

Becoming a TRIO Alumni

Upon Graduation in addition to being an alumni of The College of St. Scholastica, you are also now a **TRIO Alumni**. There are millions of TRIO alumni just like you working in education, business, marketing, computer systems, healthcare, etc.

Below is a list of ways to support and remain active as an alumni at CSS and in TRIO:

- Connect to the CSS/SSS Alumni registry. Go to css.edu/alumni and click on "Contact Update". **Make sure to check that you participated in Student Support Services.** Indicate whether or not you would like to receive our updates.
- Become part of the Saints Career Network at css.edu/hiresaints.

Academic Services

- I. **Academic Support:** Students have the opportunity to work with coaches on course selection, study skills, time management, learning strategies and much more. The LASSI is also available to assess student learning.
- II. **Academic Tutoring:** FREE one on one and/or group tutoring is available for SSS students (restrictions apply). Requests for tutoring can be made up until the last month of the term. However, requests will be filled on a first come first serve basis, and are dependent on tutor availability.
 SSS students need to request a tutor through their SSS coach. The SSS coach will then forward the request to the tutor coordinator. The lead tutor 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 will discuss meeting times, locations, tutoring contract, frequency, etc.
 The SSS student will be asked to agree to the following expectations:
 - 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 coach know as soon as I can.
 - I must contact my tutor 24 hours in advance if I am unable to attend a tutoring session.
 - I understand that if I miss 2 scheduled tutoring sessions that I will not receive further assistance for that subject through the SSS Tutoring Program.
 - I will let the tutor and my SSS coach 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.
- III. **College Advantage:** College Advantage is a prescribed and proactive academic support coaching program available to first-time college first years entering the SSS program. Students will receive structured coaching curriculum throughout their first year of college to promote academic, financial and personal success. The program also focuses on building community amongst participants through group workshops, service projects, and other outings. If you have further questions please speak with your SSS coach.
- IV. **Loft:** The “Loft” is a study environment provided for SSS students that is furnished with computers, wipe board, comfortable furniture, and other academic resources. The LOFT can be accessed 24 hours a day via your student ID card. Please be respectful of the equipment and noise level in the Loft. Also, please clean up after yourself so the space remains a positive one for all SSS students.

- V. **Transcripts:** SSS students are eligible for at least one free transcript from the registrar's office. Coordination for this service needs to be done with the student's SSS coach.
- VI. **Additional Services for At Risk Students:** Additional academic support materials and resources may be available and can be accessed by speaking with your SSS coach.

Personal Support

- I. **Personal Coaching:** SSS students may make an appointment with their SSS coach to talk about personal issues. Common issues students face include: adjusting to college, stress management, balancing school, work, and family, and relationship problems. SSS coaches also have a wide network of local referral sources for students needing additional services.
- II. **Housing Options for Homeless/Foster Students:** Students who identify as homeless or who have aged out of the foster care system can work with a SSS coach to discuss community and college resources for housing and other basic living needs.

Finances and Federal Student Aid

- I. **Info. on Fin. Aid Programs and Benefits/Scholarships**
 - A. **Scholarship Search:** SSS coaches are available to assist students in scholarship searches. SSS coaches 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.
 - B. **SSS Scholarship:** SSS, in conjunction with the college, will award up to \$10,000 in scholarships to eligible SSS students. Eligibility criteria: student is freshman or sophomore status, in good academic standing, and receiving the Federal PELL grant. Student interested in applying must attend an SSS scholarship workshop fall semester. The SSS Scholarship application will be available late fall semester through SSS.
- II. **Assistance in Completing Fin. Aid Applications:** SSS coaches are available to work with students one on one in filling out the FAFSA and other student financial aid applications. SSS staff work with financial aid to make sure students complete these applications in a timely matter.
- III. **Financial/Economic Literacy**
 - A. **Financial and Economic Literacy Class:** SSS students are encouraged to enroll in the FREE 1-credit class, FIN 1000: Financial and Economic Literacy and receive college credit during spring semester. This free course educates

students on financial planning for postsecondary education, debt, budgeting, credit scores, financial planning, interest rates, and investing.

- B. Individual Support:** SSS coaches are willing to work one on one with students to understand budgeting, student loans, loan forgiveness options, etc. During students' senior year, SSS counselors review loan forgiveness programs and discuss loan consolidation during exit interviews.

Career

- I. **Career Counseling:** Students may make an appointment with a SSS coach to discuss major/career options including taking a Career or Interest Inventory, resume and cover letter writing and interviewing skills.
- II. **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 FREE graduate school visits to local schools (UMD, CSS, UWS) throughout the year.**
SSS students applying for a CSS graduate program can receive one application fee waiver (NOT applicable to programs using a centralized application system). This fee waiver needs to be requested by the student.
- III. **Faculty/Peer Mentoring:** SSS counselors will help students find peer/student, faculty, community and/or alumni mentors.
- IV. **Leadership Certificate Program:** Earn a SSS Leadership Certificate by immersing in our campus community. Enhance your resume, develop your professional skills, become a role model. Certificate earners will be honored at an SSS event during spring semester. Students can also include the certificate on applications and resumes. This program is free to all SSS students and only available to SSS students. Enroll by discussing and registering for the program with Tiffany at tsnider@css.edu.

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