



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

The College of St. Scholastica

TRiO
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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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
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

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. Do You Know TRiO? A TRiO History Fact Sheet, www.trioprograms/clearinghouse.

The College of St. Scholastica SSS program is 100% federally funded TRiO Program sponsored by the US Department of Education (\$284,755 annually). Our SSS program serves 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.

Confidentiality

Students sign an informed consent when entering SSS. Below is an excerpt from the informed consent SSS students signed during intake:

Student Services adheres to state laws and ethical standards that require that all information is held confidential. 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.*

Consent for e-mail communications:

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 is 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. 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 Disability Resource Center (DRC), SSS staff will send a form to the DRC for verification of disability. 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. 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 counselor 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 and Campbell to assess learning and career choice.

Mandatory Meetings/Services

SSS students are required to participate in at least **two** services each semester. Reminders via email and regular mail will be sent to students throughout the year.

Mid-Term Grade Checks

The SSS office receives mid-term reports on students from the Academic Advising office. *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.

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/sss.

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.

Below is a list of ways to support and remain active in TRiO:

- 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://www.css.edu/Administration/Career-Services/Networking/Career-Network.html>
- Learn more about State and National TRiO Alumni Membership by reading the attached.
- Be willing to appear as an “Alumni Spotlight” in our SSS newsletter.
- Write a postcard to your legislators describing the impact TRiO had on your life (postcards enclosed).

Best of Luck as you move forward. You will always have SSS and TRiO supporting you as you pursue your future goals.

SSS Services

SSS provides a variety of services to help you reach your academic, career and personal goals. A summary of these services is provided below followed by a more detailed description. **These services are offered to ALL SSS students.**

Student Support Services (SSS) Service Summary								
Services	Semesters Offered			Service Delivery				
	Fall	Spring	Summer	Indv. Appt.	Wkshp./Crs	Trip	Mailings	Other
Academic Tutoring	X	X		X				
Assistance in Course Selection	X	X	X	X				
Info. on Fin. Aid Programs and Benefits/Scholarships	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Assistance in Completing Fin. Aid Applications	X	X	X	X				
Financial/Economic Literacy	X	X	X	X	X			
Graduate School	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Personal Counseling	X	X	X	X				
Information on Career Options	X	X	X	X	X			
Academic Support	X	X	X	X				
Faculty and Peer Mentoring	X	X	X	X				
Housing Options for Homeless/Foster Students	X	X	X	X				
Additional Services for At Risk Students	X	X	X	X				
Grant Aid (restrictions apply)		X						X

Academic Services

- I. **Academic Support:** Students have the opportunity to work with counselors 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 who are not able to access CAS tutoring services (restrictions apply). Requests for tutoring can be made up to approximately 1 month before the end of the term. However, requests will be filled on a first come first serve basis and are dependant on tutor availability

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 will discuss meeting times, locations, 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 counselor know ASAP.
- 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, I will not receive further assistance for that subject through the SSS Tutor Program.
- 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.

- III. **Loft:** The “Loft” is a study environment provided for SSS students that is furnished with desk top computers, T.V. and VCR, 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.
- IV. **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.
- V. **Additional Services for At Risk Students:** Additional academic support materials and resources may be available and can be accessed by speaking with your SSS counselor.

Personal Support

- I. **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, anxiety, balancing school, work, and family, and relationship problems. All issues discussed in counseling are kept confidential. SSS counselors 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 counselor 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 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.
- B. 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.

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.

- II. Assistance in Completing Fin. Aid Applications:** SSS counselors 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 1777: 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 counselors 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 counselor to discuss major/career options including taking the Campbell Interest and Skill Survey, 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 throughout the year.**

SSS students applying for a CSS graduate program can receive up to one \$50 application fee waiver (NOT applicable to OTH & PTH). This fee waiver needs to be requested by the student.

- III. **GRE Prep Courses:** SSS collaborates with McNair Scholars and S-Stem to provide opportunities for SSS students to attend FREE GRE prep courses.
- IV. **Faculty/Peer Mentoring:** SSS counselors will help students find peer/student, faculty, community and/or alumni mentors.
- V. **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. They 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 Celeste at Czuniga@css.edu.

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