

# Student Support Services



## Annual Newsletter

### Spring 2020 Edition

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## GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

### *Virtu-BULL Greetings!*

Our Student Support Services (SSS) staff has transitioned all services to a remote environment due to COVID-19 in an effort to promote the health and safety of our students, staff, and community. We maintain continuity in our services as we conduct live virtual meetings with students, host programs and conduct workshops seamlessly. Our students have adjusted to remote learning with maturity and a larger understanding of world events. Recently we conducted our last

workshop for the semester, held our inaugural Alumni Panel & Networking session, SSS Spirit Week, Peer Coach Meet & Greet, and our SSS LLC Live Stream Bulls in the Cloud.

Highlights of our student success permeate throughout our 2020 newsletter. The SSS Program continues to contribute to the University of South Florida's student success metrics. Currently 96% of our students are in good academic standing and 92% persist from one year to the next, fall 2019.

Our national association, Council for Equal Opportunity Program Personnel, provided a national competition for TRIO students. We are excited that one of USF's Student Support Services participants was selected for the Keith Sherin Global Leaders Program and has the opportunity to study abroad in Hague Netherlands. The recipient of this scholarship is featured in our Student Spotlight (pg. 2 )

Our partners are extremely valuable to our success as reflected throughout the newsletter. Residential Education Services afforded us the opportunity to have faculty in residence and to propel our Annual Awards Ceremony to a new level. Our partnership with BULL2BULL Financial Education afforded our students workshops including "Don't Discredit Your Future" and one-on-one financial literacy sessions.

Our newsletter demonstrates several student accomplishments and we encourage you to join us as we celebrate our student successes.

*Reba Garth*  
Director

#OneUSF | #TRIOWorks

# Student Spotlight: Kedrine Gale

SSS is incredibly proud to introduce you to an outstanding sophomore student, **Kedrine Gayle**. Here is her amazing story – in her own words!

## •How has SSS impacted your success at USF?

I am a proud student of the USF Student Support Services TRiO program class of 2018. I can attest to the fact that I was Divinely placed into this program which has opened the door to so many opportunities. I have proven SSS to be a program that exposes students to holistic professional growth, increased academic and involvement performance, and last but certainly not the least, the creation of many long-term friendships.

Without SSS I probably would not have had enough knowledge and appreciation for on-campus resources such as Bull2Bull financial counseling, Suit-A-Bull, the Wellness Center, and the USF Counseling Center. There were many times that life got a little bit overwhelming with college life but through the guidance of SSS, I was able to boldly seek help through these resources and get my life back on track.

Through SSS I was able to get personal coaching for resume writing and building my cover letter from Mrs. Stephy Opatola, an SSS past Graduate Assistant (see Alumni Spotlight). This landed me my first student job at the USF Center for Student Involvement and it also aided me in applying to many scholarships.

Through SSS assignments, activities, and workshops, focused on professional development, networking, critical thinking and the enhancement of intrinsic motivation, I have been able to successfully complete interviews which have landed me positions as USF Ambassador, USF Community Manager, Chaplain for the National Council of Negro Women Inc., Community Service Chair for the Jamaican Alliance Movement, mentor for the Intercultural Student Leadership Conference, and more.

Believe it or not, making friends at this academic level can be a bit hard yet extremely necessary. It is very essential to have a healthy mental state while in college. For this reason, it is important to have friends,



mentors, and just overall genuine individuals to remind you that you are human – it's okay not to be okay sometimes, and to pause to admire the clouds of the sky. I am forever grateful for Shamease Cooper (SSS RA) and Chi-Chi Ilonzo (SSS RA), Merly Jean-Louis (SSS Peer Coach) and Janessa Toledo (past co-worker and SSS mentor). They were so patient in answering my questions and helping me to smoothly transition into college.

Being in SSS has taught me that regardless of your past, background, race, socioeconomic status and more, there are endless opportunities to help us live in our destiny – but “opportunities” is all that they will be, until we go out and pursue them. I have also learned that you don't have to be everybody else, you just have to be the best YOU.

Thank you so much to Ms. Roshanda Pinson (past SSS Counselor and current mentor) for helping me to stay grounded, for being a shoulder to cry on, and just for being a home away from home. You are truly an angel sent from above.

Above all else, to Mrs. Reba Garth (SSS Director), Dr. LaTosha Thomas (SSS Asst. Director), Mr. Brian Williams (SSS Counselor), Dr. Althea Blake (SSS Counselor), Ms. Eirleene Bristow (SSS Administrative Specialist), Mr. Raymond Cabrera (Upward Bound Director), the Undergraduate Studies office staff, and the entire Student Support Services TRiO program family: Thank you so much for seeing my potential and never turning a blind eye. Thank you so much for your many words of encouragement, the checkups and reassurance that everything will be okay. Your belief in us, the students, is priceless and may God eternally bless you all. The seeds that you have planted within all of us will surely grow to blossom.

- **What are some of the things you hope to accomplish while at USF?**

For the remainder of my academic tenure, I hope to maintain a good academic standing and continue to serve the Student Support Services TRiO program and the USF Alumni Association's Student Ambassador program in any way that I can. I also hope to aid the USF Chapter of the National Council of Negro Women Inc., the Jamaican Alliance Movement, Project Downtown Tampa, The USF Gospel Choir and other student-led organizations. In the near future, I endeavor to establish a student-led organization geared towards advocacy through self-discovery and communal outreach. Above all else, I hope to continue to walk in God's purpose for my journey at USF.

- **What are your future career goals and why did you select this particular career field?**

After graduation, my plan is to attend graduate school and ultimately earn a Doctor of the Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. I aspire to tackle the health care system and combat the negative impacts it has caused minorities. I hope to go into low-income communities and assist the local Community Health Centers in providing more convenient appointments for their patients. Normally, some patients would have to wait months to get an appointment or a simple check-up. I also hope to develop private practices of my own, inclusive of rehabilitation centers that not only offer affordable healthcare but also offers a two-year educational nursing program for students. My primary focus is to ensure that health care is made accessible for everyone, regardless of their background, religion, socioeconomic status, and more. As an immigrant,

I have had first-hand experience with just how difficult it can be to gain access to proper, diversified healthcare. I have concluded that for as long as death is no respecter of person, access to good healthcare should also be available to all people unconditionally. In addition to this goal, I plan to become a starter of conversations which regard the overall decrease of food deserts, food insecurity, incarceration rates, police brutality, gender wage gaps, and overall discrimination. It is important that we acknowledge that "not to speak is to speak and not to act is to act." The sad truth is that many of us don't realize that we need help and I refuse to say that our current societal system has won. If there was ever a time for collaboration, it is now! It is time to answer to our human responsibility of being our brother's keeper.

- **Where is your hometown?**

In 2016, I immigrated to the United States from the beautiful Island of Jamaica. In Jamaica, I resided in the cool town of Mandeville, Manchester. There is where I would call home! I currently reside in Ocoee, Florida.

- **Why did you choose to attend USF?**

I personally believe that I was Divinely placed at USF. After not getting into my dream school, I was a bit depressed and uninterested in the entire college admission process. However, after doing some research and getting the great news that I had the I was afforded the great opportunity to become a USF bull, I was extremely grateful and though anxious, ready to take on the journey. This is definitely a decision that I am yet to regret. USF has helped to redefine the meaning of success in my life. With being exposed to different communities, backgrounds, races, ethnicities and more, I was able to appreciate the fact that all the aspects of my identity play a holistic role in my call to leadership. Not only am I a student, but I am also a black Jamaican Christian woman that knows for certain that giving back and advocating for others are aspects of God's purpose for my life.

- **Philosophy:**

"And when you discover what you will be in your life, set out to do it as if God Almighty called you at this particular moment in history to do it. For it isn't by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are." Just six months before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke these words to a group of





students at the Barratt Junior High School in Philadelphia. It is through these words that I have embraced within my entire being that, “whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well.”

• **Short Backstory:**

In 2016, I immigrated to the United States from Jamaica. “Depressed,” “sad,” “angry,” “fed up,” are just some words that I would use to describe my academic and emotional life just before I immigrated. My grades had shifted as loved ones passed away, insecurities consumed my thoughts and the idea of suicide became more of a friend than a visitor. I vividly remember the day that I was surely ready to say good-bye to this world. The state of my mind at that moment could be likened to that of the potency residing within a grey cloud. With divine intervention and the help of family members, my life took on a new stance, desperate to meet purpose.

Thank you so much to the many supportive friends that I have made through SSS. Only the Lord knows how you put up with this weirdo Jamaican girl. I love you all.



# Awards Ceremony

## Put Spotlight on SSS Scholars

TriO Student Support Services (SSS) hosted an intimate award luncheon in the Marshall Center to celebrate SSS students' outstanding academic achievements. As of the end of the Fall 2019 semester, 96% of SSS students are in good academic standing and 61% earned institutional GPAs of 3.0 or above. At the luncheon, 34 students were formally presented with certificates of achievement for earning USF GPAs of 3.5 or above. Freshman and award recipient, Nya Menoze, shared her sentiments about the event stating, "Getting that award made me feel like all my hard work wasn't in vain. I really enjoyed getting together with my fellow SSS members to celebrate our accomplishments". *SSS students are hardworking and high achieving Bulls!*





# 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:

- Take the Lead! SSS Student Leader Panel
- Learning beyond the Classroom
- When I Grow Up . . . - Career and Major Exploration
- Strategies for Success
- Healthy Relationships Part I: Trick-or-Treat?
- Healthy Relationships Part II: Self-Love
- De-stressor of the Semester
- Spring Break Survival Guide
- Networking 101
- Taking Charge of Your Credit
- Alumni Panel and Graduate School Forum



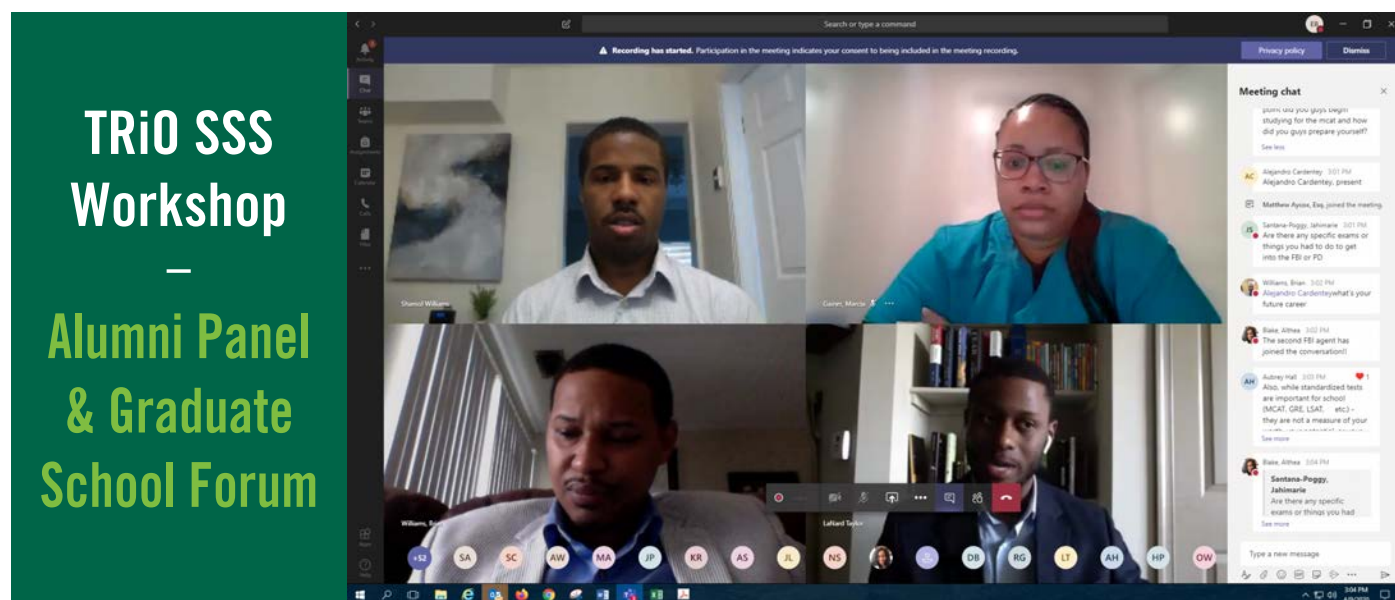
*SSS Counseling Team*



# SSS Alumni Panel & Graduate School Forum

In April 2020, the first ever “live” remote SSS workshops was held. Using videoconferencing technology, there were alumni working in a variety of careers who offered words of wisdom to SSS students.

Sophomore students also held a graduate school forum with **Gary Oliver**, Assistant Director of Graduate Student Services in the USF Office of Graduate Studies. Students received information about applying to and securing funding for graduate/professional school. Graduating senior Shamease Cooper also participated in the Graduate School Forum to provide information about applying to graduate and professional schools from a student perspective – she was admitted to all 7 programs for which she applied!



## WE APPRECIATE THE FOLLOWING GUESTS FOR PARTICIPATING:

- Marcia Gainer, MSN, FNP-C - Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner
  - Harold Paul, M.D. - Academic Hospitalist
  - LaNard Taylor, M.A. – FBI Special Agent
- Aubrey Hall, M.A. - Social Services/Non-Profit Leader
  - Ovett Wilson, M.Ed. – Principal, K-8
  - Danielle Blyden, M.S.W. – School Social Worker
  - Shamol Williams, M.D. – Primary Care Physician
  - Matthew Aycox, Esq. – Attorney and Special Agent
- Cheryl Pollock, M.A. - Social Services/Non-Profit Leader
- Gary Oliver, Ed.S. - Assistant Director of USF Graduate Student Services
- Shamease Cooper – USF Public Health graduating senior (attending Nursing school)



# Black Brown College Brown Summit

The Office of the Vice President for Student Success hosted the SSS Director and six SSS students to represent USF at the 2020 Black, Brown and College Bound Summit (BBCBS). The BBCBS has been hosted by Hillsborough Community College annually since 2006. Every year, the BBCBS attracts influential national speakers and scholars to address the barriers that affect persistence and completion among minority males. The three-day gathering of students and speakers covers a variety of topics, including mentorship and strategies for

retention and success for young men of color. SSS student and BBCBS attendee William Persaud (Sophomore, Integrated Public Relations & Advertising major) noted, "It was a great motivating and learning experience. Being able to hear speakers that share similar experiences as you be in a position to make a difference in education in communities of color was great to hear." The SSS Director was proud to join these future leaders at the Summit!





# SSS Values Campus Collaborators

**Bull2Bull Financial Education** is dedicated to helping students in the SSS program prepare for their financial future. Bull2Bull's Financial Success Series is specifically designed with SSS in mind. Each semester, students connect with the Peer Financial Educators to learn about money management, credit building, fraud prevention, and loan borrowing and repayment. From personalized, one-on-one coaching sessions to interactive workshops and events, Bull2Bull is here to help students increase their financial knowledge and improve their financial wellbeing.

Students can schedule a virtual coaching session by visiting [usf.edu/bull2bull](https://usf.edu/bull2bull) or contact [b2b@usf.edu](mailto:b2b@usf.edu)

Pictured below is SSS senior Juan Moreno, a Bull2Bull Peer Financial Educator

**We appreciate our collaborations with campus partners!**

# JUAN

## PEER FINANCIAL EDUCATOR



**"THE HABIT OF SAVING IS ITSELF AN EDUCATION"**  
- T. T MUNGER

**I AM AN EXPERT IN:**

-  **MONEY MANAGEMENT**
-  **STUDENT LOANS**
-  **CREDIT**

**SCHEDULE A VIRTUAL SESSION WITH ME!**

# Student Quotes

"I want to highlight the opportunities I have received since coming in Summer 2018 such as receiving a job at the Academic Success Center, being a part of Undergraduate research, joining a medical fraternity, a multicultural sorority and now I am an Orientation Leader. When I first came to USF I was not inclined to be a student here and I was more timid, since coming into SSS and building connections while networking I was able to accomplish more than I thought I could. SSS has helped me in more ways than I can imagine, and I still have the close relationships I came in with to this day. I just want to thank the SSS staff."

- **Eden Faison**, Junior,  
Biomedical Sciences/PreMed

"To me, SSS is a family. It's a program that is always looking for different ways to assist you, and ensures you're achieving academic excellence."

- **Jude Cineas**, Sophomore,  
Criminology

"SSS has done so much for me socially, academically and financially. Because of SSS, I step out of my comfort zone to do many things - such as joining a club and even holding an officer position. Whenever I need advice, all of the SSS Counselors have been helpful even if they are not my assigned counselor. SSS overall has become a great part of my college experience and has become a new family to me through the people I have met and relationships that I have gained."

- **Bobbi Flournoy**, Sophomore,  
Pre-Management

"It has helped me transition into the university better, as well as opened so many opportunities in personal, academic, and professional goals with the helpful resources they provide."

- **Sujey Coloma**, Freshman,  
Pre-Global Business



"SSS has helped in so many ways. I came to college not knowing what to do, but all that changed with SSS. They are another family and have helped to better myself."

- **Jahimarie Santana**, Freshman,  
Criminology



# Student Quotes

"SSS has been a big tool for my success at USF, without SSS and the help of my Counselor, I would have struggled without the program. The program means a lot to me. It has helped me get into college and has given me tons of different tools to use for both college life and my regular life."

- **Zachary Foley**, Sophomore,  
Pre-Computer Science

"SSS helped me understand my financial aid better."

- **Maisha Sikder**, Freshman,  
Biomedical Sciences/PrePharmacy

"SSS has been a great support system. It has helped with my social life as well as my academic success."

- **Ahmad Pinkston**, Freshman,  
Public Health

"It has helped me stay on top of things, as well as providing me with a group of people that I can always count on (students and SSS Counselors)."

- **Susana De Jesus**, Freshman,  
Pre-Management

"SSS has helped me stay on track and feel welcomed."

- **Andy Duong**, Freshman,  
Pre-Cybersecurity

"SSS has given me a home at school, a place of peace and comfort."

- **Skyler Granat**, Freshman,  
Biomedical Sciences/PreMed

"SSS has helped me by providing the necessary resources I need to be successful."

- **Jericho Morales**, Freshman,  
Environmental Biology



A promotional graphic for SSS Spirit Week. At the top, the word "VIRTUAL" is written in red, slanted letters. Below it, "SSS SPIRIT WEEK" is written in large, bold, white letters. The graphic is divided into five columns, each representing a day of the week: MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, and FRIDAY. Each column has a title and a corresponding photo. Monday: "USF Tailgate" with a photo of a person in a USF mascot costume. Tuesday: "Mi Casa" with a photo of a group of people sitting on a couch. Wednesday: "Social Distance Twinning" with a photo of two people in a video call. Thursday: "Dress to Impress" with a photo of two men in suits. Friday: "Pajama Day" with a photo of a person in a blue pajama top. At the bottom, a black banner with white text reads: "EMAIL YOUR PHOTO TO DR. BLAKE, DM US, OR TAG @USF\_SSS".

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
USF Tailgate	Mi Casa	Social Distance Twinning	Dress to Impress	Pajama Day
				

EMAIL YOUR PHOTO TO DR. BLAKE, DM US, OR TAG @USF\_SSS

# USF Homecoming Queen




SSS is proud to honor the USF Homecoming Queen, **Shamease Cooper**! Shamease is an SSS student and graduating senior who will earn a degree in Public Health. She was accepted into all 7 graduate and professional schools for which she applied and has chosen to attend the USF Nursing Program after graduation. While at USF, Shamease served as an SSS Peer Coach, Residential Assistant, and on the Executive Board of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). She has also mentored many SSS students who value her advice and support. Shamease is the epitome of a Wonder-Bull!

*Congratulations to outstanding SSS student Shamease Cooper!*






# Outstanding SSS Graduate



ARYSSA SIMPSON  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA  
TAMPA, FL

ABRCMS  
Travel Awardee




SMART PROGRAM  
SUMMER UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

## Effects of AC-45594 and Derivative on Inhibiting Ewing Sarcoma Cells

<sup>\*</sup>Aryssa Simpson<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>, Debananda Pati<sup>2,3</sup>, Scott Gilbertson<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, <sup>2</sup>Department of Pediatrics, Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, TX  
<sup>3</sup>Baylor College of Medicine, <sup>4</sup>Department of Chemistry, University of Houston, Houston, TX  
<sup>\*</sup>Baylor College of Medicine Summer Undergraduate Research Program (BCM SMART) Scholar



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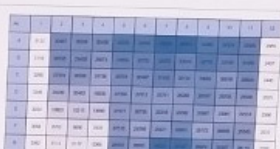
A PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE

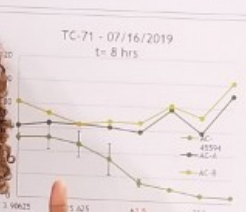
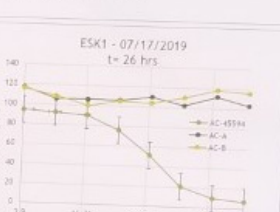
### Abstract / Introduction



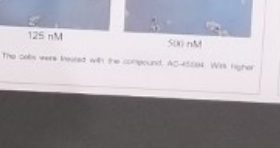
Ewing sarcoma is a cancer found primarily in the bones/soft tissue of children and adolescents. According to the NIH, approximately 250 children in the United States annually are diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma as it accounts for about 1.5 percent of all childhood cancers.

Through a high throughput screening of many compounds, our lab has identified that the compound AC-45594 was able to inhibit Ewing sarcoma (EWS) cell growth. Previous research has noted the importance of SF-1, which is responsible for the development of reproductive organs. This protein is considered a therapeutic target for childhood adrenocortical tumors. We hypothesized that inhibiting EWS cells with AC-45594 would lead to a decrease in SF-1 expression and a subsequent decrease in cell growth.

### Results

### Conclusions

- The compounds, AC-A and AC-B, had no effects on the Ewing Sarcoma cells.
- With higher concentrations of these compounds, the cell density remained constant.

### Significance/ Impact

By testing the two compounds, an increased understanding was gained on how the AC-45594 compound was responsible for inhibiting Ewing Sarcoma cell growth.

### Discussion/Future Directions

From the testing of the two compounds, we gained an understanding into the underlying mechanisms on how the AC-45594 compound were responsible for inhibiting Ewing Sarcoma cell growth. For future research, we will consider stem cell transplantation. Also, we proposed continuous modification of the structure for AC-45594.

### Funding

- CPRIT Grant RP16(283)
- ABRCMS Travel Grant Award
- NSF Florida-Georgia Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Travel Award (HRD #1201961)

### References

1. Debananda Pati, et al. Identification of the Ewing Sarcoma Factor 1 (EWS-F1) as a Novel Target for Ewing Sarcoma. *Journal of Cellular Biochemistry* 115:1-10 (2014).  
2. Debananda Pati, et al. Identification of the Ewing Sarcoma Factor 1 (EWS-F1) as a Novel Target for Ewing Sarcoma. *Journal of Cellular Biochemistry* 115:1-10 (2014).  
3. Debananda Pati, et al. Identification of the Ewing Sarcoma Factor 1 (EWS-F1) as a Novel Target for Ewing Sarcoma. *Journal of Cellular Biochemistry* 115:1-10 (2014).  
4. Debananda Pati, et al. Identification of the Ewing Sarcoma Factor 1 (EWS-F1) as a Novel Target for Ewing Sarcoma. *Journal of Cellular Biochemistry* 115:1-10 (2014).

### Acknowledgements

Texas Children's Hospital, Department of Pediatrics  
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Christian Yang  
Baylor College of Medicine  
Lauree Connor Ph.D.  
Evelyn Young Ph.D.  
Kurt R. Megj

Aryssa Simpson, SSS participant and Chemical Engineering senior, has been admitted into the doctoral program in Biomedical Engineering within the Joint Department of Biomedical Engineering at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill) and North Carolina State University (NCSU). Aryssa will graduate during summer 2020 and begin her PhD program in the Fall. A special thank you to Dr. Bernard Batson, Director of Diversity & Inclusion Programs for the USF College of Engineering, for his support and mentorship of this outstanding student. We are proud of Aryssa and her wonderful academic achievements!

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## Alumni Success

**Stephy Opatola** obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from USF in English and a Master of Science degree in Intelligence Studies, where she focused in transforming data into actionable information for decision makers. While at USF, Mrs. Opatola worked in the SSS office as an FWS student and as the Summer Program Coordinator. She has also worked as a Resume Writing Consultant for the SSS Summer Bridge Program, which helped large numbers of SSS students secure jobs on and off campus. In her current role, Mrs. Opatola works as a Data Management Specialist at Step Up Suncoast in Sarasota. Her main duties entail submitting detailed reports to local and state governments, while providing technical support to staff. Identified as a top employee within the organization, Mrs. Opatola was recently selected to attend a Leadership Academy and hopes to continue rising in her career. She noted, "I work for a nonprofit dedicated to helping low-income families achieve self-sufficiency. This organization reminds me so much of the noble work SSS does for students. I am a proud USF grad and an even prouder SSS alum. Thank you SSS for ALL you do!" Congratulations to this outstanding alumni for her achievements!





# Mentoring: Brothers Reaching Ultimate Heights (B.R.U.H.)

**Brothers Reaching Ultimate Heights (B.R.U.H.)** is a diverse mentoring group that was formed by Mr. Brian Williams (SSS Counselor) after several male SSS students requested male guidance. BRUHs officially began in the Fall of 2018 with eight male students, ranging from freshmen to juniors. B.R.U.H. has a motto of Being Real Unified and Honest. Each member must acknowledge and show love to their fellow B.R.U.H when they cross paths and demonstrate uplifting and encouraging actions to each other on a regular basis. B.R.U.H. has performed community service at Trinity Café, helping feed people who are homeless. B.R.U.H has also helped the USF Black Faculty and Staff Association clean St. Anselm's Episcopal Chapel Center near campus. The group has now increased to 16 members, and other programs are interested in

collaboration projects. According to B.R.U.H member Lincoln Esmie (3rd year senior Psychology major), "I feel like being a part of B.R.U.H. as an older member has impacted my leadership skills. It has made me want to do great in all aspects of my scholastic career because I have younger BRUHs that look to me as a role model. I love the relations that have been formed between me and other BRUHs because I not only get mentored, but I am also a mentor to someone else – that keeps me afloat and makes me happy. It makes me want to be the best me I can be and I enjoy every aspect of it." B.R.U.H. will continue creating mentoring relationships and engaging in service projects while uplifting male students so they can be successful at USF!





# SSS Mentors for Youth



Housing and Residential Education established a service-learning partnership this year with Brooks-DeBartolo Collegiate High School's Students of Color Association (SOCA). This partnership served as an opportunity for USF students to mentor youth in the areas of college readiness, college transition, academic preparedness, and career readiness, and the SSS and Judy Genshaft Honors College Living Learning Communities were selected to kick off the partnership. Our students made several visits to the high school's campus to engage with the SOCA

students, and also volunteered alongside them at Feeding Tampa Bay. Our students found the opportunity very rewarding. Freshman Zion Baisden said, "Working with the high school students was great. It feels great to be like an older brother to a group of young men.

Letting them know that everything will be fine if you grind and strive for greatness". Freshman Rebecca Jean-Louis shared, "It was a good experience talking to students who were just a few years younger than me, helping them get out their comfort zone to explore the unknown: their future".



# Service to University & Community

A group of twenty-three (23) girl scouts from Young Middle School visited University of South Florida in November for a personalized campus tour hosted by SSS students. The tour began with breakfast with our female students and a tour of Beta Hall. While they ate together, as well as throughout the day, the girl scouts had the opportunity to ask our students about SSS, about their backgrounds, and about life at USF. Led by SSS sophomore and USF Orientation Leader, Louna Clerge, the students were guided to several points of interest on campus, including Greek Village, our state-of-the-art Interdisciplinary Sciences building, the Campus Recreation Center, and MLK Plaza. The tour ended at the Marshall Student Center where the students were treated to complimentary lunch at Panera Bread. The tour proved to be a positive experience for both our SSS students and the girl

scouts. Freshman Yelianys Remedio shared, "It was an amazing day getting to talk to the girls and show them around campus. I always knew I wanted to go to college, but being first generation, I never had anyone in college I could look up to. I hope after this experience I helped motivate at least one of those young girls to pursue further education, whether at USF or another university". Taisha Edwin-Williams, Region 3 Outreach Manager for Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, commended our students for their hard work and leadership. Mrs. Williams said, "The women in SSS truly demonstrated what it is to be a G.I.R.L. -a Girl Scouts acronym meaning 'Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, and Leader'. They knew how to connect and relate with the girls, and I was happy to have them as our tour guide".



# Congratulations to the Men of SSS for Outstanding Service



The USF Chapter of Black Female Development Circle, Inc. recognized the contributions of SSS Counselor Brian Williams and SSS students Jai Brown and Dezmond Booker at their annual tribute to Black men. The students were honored for their community service and Mr. Williams was honored for his campus contributions to student success. We are proud of the men of SSS for helping others!



# Meet the Student Support Services Staff

- Reba Garth, Director
- Dr. LaTosha Thomas, Assistant Director
- Brian Williams, Counselor/Advisor
- Dr. Althea Blake, Interim Counselor/Advisor
- Eirleene Bristow, Administrative Specialist
- Michkayla Dandreano, Summer Program Coordinator
- Nicholas Irby, Office Assistant
- Brandon Marshall, Office Assistant
- Louna Clerge, Peer Coach
- Shyde Emile, Peer Coach
- Nicholas Irby, Peer Coach
- Donvante Lavilis, Peer Coach



The SSS staff worked quickly to respond to the global pandemic to ensure support for students continued in an effective and efficient way. All SSS students were contacted through emails, Canvas posts, and social media in the early days of USF moving to a remote world due to coronavirus-19. In addition, SSS Counselors spoke with approximately 100 students by phone within the first 2 weeks of students “returning” from spring break. SSS also helped students stay connected to the regular updates posted on the USF Coronavirus Updates page by echoing these updates in workshops, appointments, and electronic communications. SSS also created a Technology Survey for incoming freshmen students to gauge their technology needs. In this way,

SSS was able to maintain steady contact with continuing and incoming students to quickly assess their needs during this unprecedented crisis. SSS then worked with campus partners and national organizations to help fill gaps and help students stay on the path to success at USF. We are proud of SSS students for handling the transition to remote learning in a calm and mature way. We are proud to be **#ONEUSF!**

WE ARE  
**#ONEUSF**

# Thank you to the USF departments who contribute to the success of SSS students in various ways!

- Academic Success Center
- Black Faculty & Staff Association
- Bull2Bull Financial Education
- Campus Recreation
- Career Services
- Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement
- Center for Student Involvement
- Center for Student Well-Being
- Center for Victim Advocacy
- College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)
- College Reach Out Program
- Corporate Mentor Program, USF Muma College of Business
- College of Business
- Housing & Residential Education
- New Student Connections
- Office of Academic Advocacy
- Office of Admissions
- Office of Community Engagements and Partnerships
- 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
- Take Stock in Children
- The Students of Concern Assistance Team
- University Scholarships & Financial Aid Services
- Upward Bound Program
- USF Athletics
- USF Counseling Center
- USF Dining Services



**Student Support Services  
Office of Undergraduate Studies**

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