

Annual Newsletter Spring 2021 Edition

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Student Support Services

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Virtu-BULL Greetings! Our Student Support Services (SSS) staff has continued to offer services remotely due to COVID-19. However, we are delighted to share our annual newsletter because we remained engaged and are absolutely "bullish" about student success. Highlights of our student success permeate throughout the newsletter. We conducted our last



workshop for the semester, held our inaugural SSS Graduation Ceremony, Alumni Panel & Graduate School Forum, and Peer Coach Meet & Greet. We are currently assisting our newest SSS Bulls with the onboarding process prior to the start of Summer B. The SSS Program continues to contribute to the University of South Florida's student success metrics. Currently 92% of our students are in good academic standing and 91% persist from one year to the next, fall 2020.

Our partners are extremely valuable to our success as reflected throughout the newsletter. This years' highlight goes to The Center for Student Well Being. Much appreciation to the staff for transitioning quickly to offer remote workshops for our Summer Program students, and continuing remote services throughout the year. Our students ranked Safer Sex Party and Alcohol and Drug Awareness as the top presentations.

Our newsletter demonstrates several student accomplishments including winning the USF Pageant, earning the Outstanding Student Award, and the SSS Spotlight. We encourage you to join us as we celebrate the success of these hardworking and resilient students.

Reba Garth

Director #OneUSF | #TRIOWorks



Student Spotlight: Kianna Pintado-Adames

Kianna Pintado-Adames is a first-generation college student who has participated in the Student Support Services program since June 2018. Born in the Bronx, New York Kianna grew up in Orlando, Florida where she has spent most of her life. Kianna is a junior majoring in Elementary Education and she looks forward to teaching first grade students as they begin their educational pursuits. She became a "teacher" early in life as she taught her Dominican Republic native mother how to speak English. She chose to attend USF because she appreciates the cohort model and the sense of community provided by the College of Education.

Kianna is an outstanding student who also works in the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships' Community-Based Federal Work-Study (CBFWS) program. Kianna's community placement is at Mort **Elementary Community Partnership School as a Virtual** Tutor. Despite the current pandemic, the CBFWS program has continued to support community partners through students working remotely. During the Fall 2020 semester, Kianna took great initiative to meet the challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic to support Mort Elementary students with virtual tutoring. Kianna is bilingual in English and Spanish, and thus uniquely able to support these students and their families. Her exceptional work was also featured as a Success Story by the CBFWS Office of Community Engagement. Prior to working as a Virtual Tutor, Kianna served as a Coordinator for Youth Events at the University Area Community Development Corporation. In this role with the CBFWS program, Kianna coordinated the annual trick-or-treat event by recruiting community partnerships, designed numerous flyers, and launched a monthly newsletter to update residents on events. Kianna is grateful for the opportunity to put to use the skills and knowledge she has gained from her experiences as an Education major to serve the local community.

In addition to support from the College of Education and the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships, Kianna also credits SSS with helping her become a successful USF student. Kianna notes that her biggest challenge as a college student has been learning how



"Thank you to SSS for finding me my best friend in the world, fellow SSS student Jason Azif!" -Kianna

to manage the rigorous coursework, working, and being part of an organization – she is a third year member of the Golden Bulls Dance team. Kianna notes, "SSS has helped me achieve success at USF by holding me accountable to reaching my highest standards as a student. With SSS I felt like I was capable of doing anything I put my energy into because I always had amazing leaders to reach for support if needed." For hobbies, Kianna enjoys dancing, singing karaoke, and eating pho. We are thrilled to see the many accomplishments of this outstanding and well-rounded SSS student!

See Kianna featured in the USF College of Education newsletter by clicking <u>here</u>!

See Kianna interviewed about her work with the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships' Community-Based Federal Work-Study (CBFWS) program by clicking <u>here</u>!

USF Pageant Winner

The Center for Student Involvement hosts the USF Pageant annually. This scholarship pageant provides support for bright and talented USF students with the goal of fostering an environment of representation, belonging and community. The 2021 USF Pageant was held virtually due to COVID-19. The winner of this year's pageant is **Kedrine Gayle**, a junior Public Health major and Sociology minor. Kedrine's platform is "shining a light on the detrimental effects of police brutality on Black adolescent mental health." She hopes to encourage others to strengthen unity and appreciate diversity. Kedrine shared her journey into USF in the <u>2019-2020 SSS newsletter</u> as the Student Spotlight feature. Kedrine also proudly serves as a USF Ambassador and is a member of the Black Leadership Network. She is also an active member of student organizations including the National Council of Negro Women and the Jamaican Alliance Movement. SSS is proud of the many ways in which Kedrine continues to offer service and leadership to the USF community!



Virtual Review

The year 2020 was unique and challenging on a variety of levels, and it was a year that had significant impact on SSS. The global health pandemic and the social justice movement for racial equality impacted SSS students and staff in profound ways. SSS shared special messages directly with students emphasizing our engagement with anti-racist efforts and our support for social justice movements. We let our students know we are available to support them and shared USF resources that are available for support as well. SSS continues to endorse the USF Principles of Community and the USF Anti-Racism initiatives being led by USF President Steven Currall. In the "Expanding our efforts to promote inclusion, opportunity, and civility" message published by President Currall, SSS was mentioned as an important ongoing effort to support students from diverse backgrounds. SSS students and staff continue to work towards promoting these initiatives on campus and throughout the community. Discussions around diversity, inclusion, and equity remain an important part of the SSS experience.

Due to the pandemic, the SSS summer 2020 cohort has experienced college life largely from a distance through

virtual technology. During the SSS Summer Bridge Program the students received all services virtually – Check-in, Week of Welcome, meetings with SSS Counselors, SSS College Success Workshops, and Class Instruction. Despite these unique challenges, SSS students remained positive, engaged, and resilient. SSS used innovative methods to re-create an in-person experience whenever possible, such as creating collages of virtual "pods" similar to living in residence halls on campus (as shown in pictures). The SSS Peer Coaches were also instrumental in helping students stay connected to campus life as they engaged in student outreach and hosted virtual events, such as scavenger hunts and movie nights. The SSS Counselors conducted virtual meetings with individual students and also offered virtual evening office hours that included discussions about wellness, interview attire, and professional etiquette.

In review, SSS is proud of the innovative strategies we developed to effectively help students succeed at USF during this period of unprecedented challenges.

SSS sends a heartfelt thank you to our students who remained dedicated to success and we appreciate our campus partners who provided support – we are excited to see you all on campus again soon!









Mr. & Miss SSS



Congratulations to LaTrell Pryor and Rebecca Jean-Louis for being selected as Mr. & Miss SSS 2020-2021. These two students were chosen for this honor for demonstrating academic excellence and commitment to SSS, USF, and the community. LaTrell and Rebecca work hard in the classroom, and also spend time helping others succeed.

Thank you for representing SSS so well!

Student Quotes

"Without SSS, I wouldn't have felt included in the USF community during this time of online classes and COVID-19. SSS has helped me succeed academically since my first semester (summer of 2020) by guiding me through the process of registering for classes, providing resources to study during midterms and finals, and informing us of scholarship opportunities. The counselors and fellow students have helped me during stressful times, answering questions of financial and academic concerns. This program has wonderful workshops that have taught me about all the resources the university offers, and have inspired me to not give up on pursuing my academic and career goals. Without the support of this program, and its people, I wouldn't have had a great freshman year."

-Carolyn Guerra Marrero, Freshmen, Health Sciences

"I have met lifelong friends in SSS and have an amazing set of counselors who are always willing to help me with any issues that I have. The endless support and encouragement from my SSS family has allowed me to become the leader that I am today and I wouldn't have been able to achieve many of my accomplishments if it wasn't for them."

-**Orlando Huertas**, Junior, Business Analytics and Information Systems with Concentration in Cybersecurity

"SSS has pushed me to strive for nothing less than average and because of this, has given me the drive I need to become the headstrong woman I am today."

-Brianna Burnsworth, Sophomore, Health Sciences



Orlando and Jeremiah started off as SSS roommates and now co-host the 0 n J Podcast!

Student Quotes

"SSS has given me many relationships with students and counselors that have grown stronger as years passed. I am grateful for my SSS Counselor, Advisor, and Friend Mr. Williams. Anytime I have had any struggles during undergrad he was the one I could talk to. It is hard for me to relate to a lot of people due to my upbringing but, I still remember scheduling 15-minute meetings, and it usually was three to four times longer. I do not believe that I would graduate USF without the support of SSS...they ACTUALLY care and want you to win."

-Fabian Clarke, Senior, Finance

"SSS has helped me succeed at USF through the constant support that they have provided me through resources and the amazing help of my SSS advisor. Also, SSS has given me lifelong friendships and together we are graduating successfully."

-Ashley Gelman, Senior, Communication Sciences & Disorders

"I really enjoyed the advising aspect of SSS, it was nice being able to figure out what I needed to do to stay on track which was a lot of help!"

-Drake Ferry, Senior, Business Analytics and Information Systems

"I want to thank SSS for always being someone I can rely on during my Collegiate Career. Something that I have learned in SSS is that there will always be people there for you and will always have your back. I think the most important lesson is that I can do anything regardless of my gender, sex, or background. I define myself and if I believe I can do it, I shall."

-Danaizha Walker, Senior, Criminology



Lifelong friendships are created in SSS!



SSS students volunteering with Feeding Tampa Bay

Outstanding Student



Junior student Kimberly Beckford is majoring in Criminology and plans to graduate Fall 2021 – in less than four years! Kimberly chose to attend USF for many reasons. She remembers helping her older sister move into Cypress Hall, an experience which led to USF becoming her dream school. She also chose USF because of the great experience she knew the Student Support Services program (SSS) would offer for a first time in college student. USF is also not too far from Kimberly's hometown of Miami, Florida and moving to Tampa would help Kimberly bond with her siblings residing in Tampa.

Kimberly notes her biggest challenge as a USF student has been battling "imposter syndrome". During her first year of college she did not feel that she belonged and was only at USF by luck. She doubted herself and would always get triggered when everyone finished their work quickly while she continued working to complete the assignment. She constantly felt burnt out as she struggled with the pressure to make her family proud while battling feelings of not belonging. Kimberly notes how SSS has helped her achieve so much at USF, "The support from the staff has been the best by far. The program has taught me how to utilize my resources and has connected me with people that could help me with my career goals. SSS has pushed me to pursue all my dreams and aspirations. Before arriving to the university, I would worry how I would be able to financially support myself, but the SSS Counselors helped me with resume building, financial literacy, and motivated me to continue to apply to scholarships. SSS has connected me with employers and have given their highest recommendation. SSS has helped me meet some of my lifelong friends and foster meaningful relationships."

With holistic support from SSS, Kimberly has gone on to overcome her feelings of not belonging and has now become an active leader in campus life. She currently serves as the Vice President of SISTUHS, Inc., Secretary for the Coalition of Black Organization Leaders, and Treasurer and Fundraising Chair for the SSS-affiliated organization Students Striving to be Successful (S-Club). In addition, Kimberly serves as mentor for the Intercultural Student Leadership Conference hosted by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and as a mentor with the Young Ladies of Success program for middle school girls at Patel Middle School. Kimberly is also a member of the USF NAACP chapter and Bulls for Kids where she serves on the committee for the Dance Marathon. Kimberly is also the recipient of several scholarships including, the USF NAACP "Black out week" annual scholarship, the Steven M. Cuervo Memorial Endowment Scholarship, the Dr. Israel "Ike" Tribble Endowed Scholarship, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Scholarship.

Kimberly engages in these activities while maintaining employment as an Ambassador at the Academic Success Center. After graduation, Kimberly aspires to become a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst and pursue a Masters degree in Applied Behavior Analysis. She wants to work in the areas of child welfare and neglect prevention or with individuals on the Autism spectrum. SSS is proud to celebrate this outstanding student!

SoL Awards



Congratulations are in order for **Sujey Coloma, Alexa Gonzalez,** and **Orlando Huertas** (left to right), who received the USF Status of Latinos (SoL) award at the virtual Hispanic Heritage Celebration Awards Ceremony. The SoL Award recognizes students, staff, faculty, alumni and/or community members who have significantly contributed to the USF Hispanic/Latinx community. We are proud of the contributions SSS students make to USF campus life.

Felicidades!

Internship Experience



SSS students continue to display grit, determination, and resilience while striving for success during the coronavirus pandemic. One example is SSS sophomore **Jared Leguillow** who spent the spring 2021 semester as an Intern for the

Kimberly-Clark Paper Mill in Mobile, Alabama. His job title as an intern is Process Engineering Co-op, and he is a Chemical Engineering major at USF. His intern duties include carrying out projects as a part of a team while complying with company safety standards and policies. His role includes documenting all data captured in lab activities in an easy to understand spread sheet in order to improve materials and meet customer needs. Overall, Jared's role as an intern is very diverse and changes per assigned task to fit the environment. Jared's internship will last for 8 months through the summer 2021 semester. More than halfway through the internship Jared notes, "I have been taught more importantly than anything else to work as a part of a team, reaching out of my own comfort zone in a public environment to communicate effectively with all team members, and understand the situation at hand. I have learned what the transition from being a student to an active employee means in this type of work. I have gained multiple connections which open new roads for me once I graduate as well. Through this experience I have gotten one step closer to fully envisioning what my career path will be once I graduate." SSS is proud of the initiative and hard work Jared demonstrated to secure this internship position. We thank the Kimberly-Clark Corporation for supporting SSS and USF students who are the leaders of the future. Jared is a shining example of SSS students who continue to show grit and resilience even while facing a global health pandemic!

SSS Inaugural Graduation Celebration



SSS held its Inaugural Graduation Celebration in April 2021 to celebrate graduating senior students. The celebration was held virtually due to COVID-19. Family and friends of the graduates were also invited to attend. The Celebration included a welcome from Miss SSS Rebecca Jean Louis, words of encouragement from Dr. Allison Crume, dean of Undergraduate Studies, and closing remarks from the SSS Director Reba Garth. The SSS Assistant Director Dr. LaTosha Thomas and the SSS Counselors Mr. Brian Williams and Mr. Nick Cullen also offered words of inspiration to the graduates as they enter the next phase of life. Former SSS Counselor Ms. Roshanda Pinson, also attended the celebration to offer support to the students that started their journey with her as their counselor. Congratulations to the SSS graduates – we are proud of your success!

Congratulations to SSS Graduates

(since summer 2020)

- Isel Aparicio, Health Sciences
- Jose Ardaya, Public Health
- Martha Balleza, Mathematics Education
- Andrene Baxter, Psychology
- Bedjina Beausejour, Health Sciences
- Morgan Becwar, World Languages & Cultures
- Alyssa Bernstein, Health Sciences
- Shaniya Briggs, Health Sciences
- Brianna Browne, Cell & Molecular Biology
- Allice Campbell, Health Sciences
- Zavier Clark, Studio Art
- Fabian Clarke, Finance
- Sebastian Coladonato, Management
- Taneisha Ealey, Behavioral Healthcare
- Carla Edouard, Health Sciences
- Lincoln Esmie, Jr., Psychology
- Angela Ferguson, Chemical Engineering
- Drake Ferry, Business Analytics & Information Systems
- Shakyra Jones, Health Sciences
- Urja Kaushik, Psychology
- Nelson Larzabal Ruiz, Biomedical Sciences
- Brendon Latortue, Health Sciences
- Donvante Lavilis, Public Health
- Loren Lawrence, Health Sciences
- Roger Mendez, Integrative Animal Biology
- Dervens Marseille, Mechanical Engineering
- Matthew Medalie, Integrated PR & Advertising
- Sarah Mohamed, Nursing
- Eddie Monzon, Criminology
- Romel Morales, Studio Art
- Jeziel Morejon Hernandez, Statistics
- Juan Moreno, Integrated PR & Advertising
- Noah Peretz, Sociology
- Ayrillyn Pierre, Political Science
- Alexia Powell, Psychology
- Matthew Reyes, Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
- Phoenix Reynolds, Public Health
- Joel Ringrose, Health Sciences
- Haley Rivera, Behavioral Healthcare
- Ellis Rodriguez, Finance
- Melissa Salazar, Psychology
- Celestria Sands, Health Sciences
- James Santana, Jr., Public Health



- Aryssa Simpson, Chemical Engineering
- Nygil Somwar, General Business Studies
- Anthony Soto, Personal Finance
- Nia Thomas, Psychology
- Bryson Thompson, Integrated Public Relations
- & Advertising
- Lisa Thompson, Public Health
- Alexandra Torres, Music
- Triton Trinh, Information Technology
- Erica Ulysse, Integrated PR & Advertising
- Marisa Urrutia, Health Sciences
- Alex Verdelus, Psychology
- Daniela Vergaray, Mass Communications
- Elizabeth Vital, Health Sciences
- Anthony Vixayo, Environmental Science & Policy
- Danaizha Walker, Criminology
- Michael Warmington, Studio Art
- Demi Zeper, Social Work
- Annalieth Garzon, Health Sciences
- Ashley Gelman, Communication Sciences & Disorders
- Martaz'Shia Gibbs, Criminology
- Caroline Haidinger, Health Sciences
- Jocelyn Hall, Political Science
- Javon Hodges, Communication
- Beachy Horace, Health Sciences
- Bayleigh Howe, Social Work
- Merly Jean-Louis, Sociology

Congratulations to SSS Graduates



- Shakyra Jones, Health Sciences
- Urja Kaushik, Psychology
- Nelson Larzabal Ruiz, Biomedical Sciences
- Brendon Latortue, Health Sciences
- Donvante Lavilis, Public Health
- Loren Lawrence, Health Sciences
- Roger Mendez, Integrative Animal Biology
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- Noah Peretz, Sociology
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- Alexia Powell, Psychology
- Matthew Reyes, Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
- Phoenix Reynolds, Public Health
- Joel Ringrose, Health Sciences
- Haley Rivera, Behavioral Healthcare
- Ellis Rodriguez, Finance
- Melissa Salazar, Psychology
- Celestria Sands, Health Sciences
- James Santana, Jr., Public Health
- Aryssa Simpson, Chemical Engineering
- Nygil Somwar, General Business Studies
- Anthony Soto, Personal Finance
- Nia Thomas, Psychology
- Bryson Thompson, Integrated Public Relations & Advertising
- Lisa Thompson, Public Health
- Alexandra Torres, Music
- Triton Trinh, Information Technology
- Erica Ulysse, Integrated PR & Advertising
- Marisa Urrutia, Health Sciences
- Alex Verdelus, Psychology
- Daniela Vergaray, Mass Communications
- Elizabeth Vital, Health Sciences
- Anthony Vixayo, Environmental Science & Policy
- Danaizha Walker, Criminology
- Michael Warmington, Studio Art
- Demi Zeper, Social Work

College Success Workshops

SSS workshops are designed to give students important information to help them be successful at USF and in life. In collaboration with campus partners, these workshops cover topics such as:

- Academic Awards
- Accessibility Education
- Alumni Panel
- Campus Involvement: SSS Student Leader Panel
- Career and Major Exploration
- Financial Literacy
- Graduate School Forum
- Healthy Relationships
- Learning beyond the Classroom
- Networking 101
- Strategies for Success
- Stress Management

Campus Partners

Thank you to the USF departments and organizations who contribute to the success of SSS students!

- Academic Success Center
- Black Faculty & Staff Association
- Black Leadership Network
- Bull2Bull Financial Education
- Campus Recreation & Wellness
- Career Services
- Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement
- Center for Student Involvement
- Center for Student Well-Being
- Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention
- College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)
- College Reach Out Program
- Corporate Mentor Program, USF Muma College of Business
- Education Abroad
- Global Citizens Project
- Housing & Residential Education
- Latino Scholarship Program
- 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
- Student Conduct & Ethical Development
- Office of Undergraduate Research
- Student Health Services
- Student Accessibility 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



Alumni Success



Mr. Jomar Lopez currently resides in Tampa, FL and graduated with Cum Laude honors from the University of South Florida in 2014 with degrees in Psychology and Biochemistry. He later earned his Master of Public Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School

of Public Health. Mr. Lopez is currently working as a Senior Strategic Researcher for the Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) of Pinellas County. In this role, Mr. Lopez extracts and analyzes community data to support data-driven decision-making by the JWB staff and Governing Board. Mr. Lopez participated in the SSS Alumni Panel this spring and offered helpful advice to current SSS students.

We are appreciative of our alumni who give back to the SSS program!



Mrs. Cheryl Pollock is a native of Brooklyn, NY. Having spent her formative years growing up in Greensboro, NC, she currently resides in Wesley Chapel, FL and graduated from the University of South Florida in 1995 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology. Since then, she's gone on to earn her

Master of Arts in Education from the University of Phoenix. She is a veteran project manager, grant writer, community organizer and trainer/group facilitator with over 25 years of experience in the public health and human service fields. Mrs. Pollock now works as the Chief Development and Communications Officer for Premier Community HealthCare Group, Inc., where she is responsible for public relations, business partnerships and resource development.Mrs. Pollock participated in the SSS Alumni Panel this spring and offered useful advice to current SSS students. We are appreciative of our alumni who give back to the SSS program!

SSS Alumnus Joins Team



SSS is excited to introduce you to Mr. Nicholas Cullen, our newest team member in the Student Support Services program (SSS). Nick will serve as an SSS Counselor/Advisor who is focused on student success from a holistic perspective. Nick was born and raised

in Tampa, FL. He is a first-generation college student who is also proud alumnus of the SSS program at USF. Nick holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminology from USF and a Master's degree in Student Personnel in Higher Education from the University of Florida. Nick worked as an SSS Peer Coach while a student at USF, a role in which he helped incoming students transition into the university during the SSS Summer Bridge Program. Nick also worked in the Dean of Students Office at the University of Florida, where he served as a graduate assistant working with Orientation. This role afforded him the opportunity to collaborate with a variety of offices and programs, wherein he gained a wide breadth of valuable experience working with various student populations in higher education. In addition, he has worked in financial aid for over two years and is looking forward to helping SSS students navigate the financial aid process. Nick is an avid sports fan and a foodie who enjoys learning about new places to eat. He is committed to using his skills and experiences to be a resource for SSS students so they succeed at USF and in life beyond.

Please join us in giving Nick a warm welcome to the Undergraduate Studies family. We are proud and excited to have him join our team!

Meet the SSS Team

- Reba Garth, Director
- Dr. LaTosha Thomas, Assistant Director
- Brian Williams, Counselor/Advisor
- Nicholas Cullen, Counselor/Advisor
- Eirleene Bristow, Administrative Specialist
- Michkayla Dandreano, Summer Program Coordinator
- Nicholas Irby, Office Assistant
- Brandon Marshall, Office Assistant
- Michkayla Dandreano, Peer Coach
- Bryce Humphrey, Peer Coach
- Nya Menoze, Peer Coach
- LaTrell Pryor, Peer Coach







Student Support Services Office of Undergraduate Studies

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