

The University of Montevallo

ASPIRE



**Student Support Services
Newsletter
February/March 2009**



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

“Lessons Learned”

Whether as a teacher of voice or as an adviser I have always worked very hard to learn as much about my students to understand how I could assist them in being the best they could be. While I don't know all of you, I am getting to know more of you as time goes by; and I truly mean it when I say that I, as well as my staff, want very much for you all to not just get by, but to exceed even your own expectations.

I reflected back on my life and experiences when I entered college, and wanted to share with you “who I was” as a new college student. I would have been eligible for the ASPIRE/SSS Program, as neither of my parents received a bachelor's degree.

In those days, no one ever used the term “first generation college student,” so I didn't have a *clue* that my college experiences and expectations might be somewhat different than someone whose parents had college degrees.

It's a given that a college education is hard, *and* expensive. There's the application fee, health fee, books, and other fees, not to mention the tuition itself. Then there is the adjustment to the university's rigor. It's difficult for many students to adjust to the academic environment, the challenging coursework, and to learn how to balance both their academic and social/personal life. Oftentimes, personal, financial, family, and other challenges play a role in the struggle to stay in college.

But sometimes we simply get in our own way, and it has nothing to do with the problems that may be beyond our control. We lose motivation, we become lazy. I would *like* to say that I made intelligent, informed choices throughout my undergraduate days, but I can't. Early on I did *really well* in the “personal freedom” part of being in college; but I often didn't take classes seriously, procrastinating in doing my work, or simply not attending classes. The classes were so big, no one would notice, right? Besides, college professors didn't take attendance. Or so I thought.

I had been exercising my personal freedom by not attending several choir rehearsals. The day I showed up again, the choral director called roll. He called my name, and when I said “present,” he said, *without even looking up*, “One more absence and don't come back.” In front of everyone! I was mortified. Did I miss that class again? *Are you kidding?* Mr. L. Wayne Batty did me a favor that day, by challenging me to do what I should have known to do myself, and I will always be grateful for that lesson.

My education deserved my energy, my commitment, and a sense of responsibility. And so does yours. As I listened to President Obama talk about the responsibility of every American citizen to pursue some sort of higher education in his recent speech, I felt a renewed belief in the concept that higher education does not just benefit the one, but it truly benefits the community.

Make the most of the time you have here at the University of Montevallo! We will commit to assist you on your journey; and you will never regret it!

Dr. Myers

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COMPLETE YOUR FAFSA!

Please be aware that the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** should be submitted as soon as possible. There are many types of financial aid that are awarded on a priority basis. If you wait too long to submit your FAFSA the priority-based aid (work study, SEOG grant, and Perkins Loan) may be gone!

If you need assistance completing or submitting your FAFSA we would be happy to help! Please contact the office at 665.6250. Remember, you should have your 2008 tax returns filed before you can complete the FAFSA.

Student of the Month

This month we are honoring *three* students, Keon Maiden, Sade Beck, and Janice Genry. All have shown incredible dedication in their studies, as well learning to find a balance with their personal life. Each of them will receive a gift card to Jazzman's Café. Congratulations!



Keon Maiden, Sophomore

"As a first generation college student, I am elated to be a member of the Montevallo family. Growing up in a community where education is considered an option, I find it imperative that I graduate from college. Being a member of SSS here at Montevallo has helped me in many venues. At first, my grades weren't the best, and my attitude towards college seem be at its nadir. The services SSS offered me have taught me priceless values and ethics. I am at the top of my classes, and my determination keeps me persevering. Because of SSS's efforts, I am where I need to be academically, socially, and emotionally. Thanks SSS!

Jenny Jones, Project Coordinator, said of Keon, "His academic improvement this past semester has been impressive! I am very proud not only of his hard work but also of his positive attitude."



HAVE A NOSE FOR NEWS?

Why not write for the ASPIRE/SSS Newsletter!

If you are interested in showing off your creative skills, we want you!

Please contact Dr. Myers at X6250.



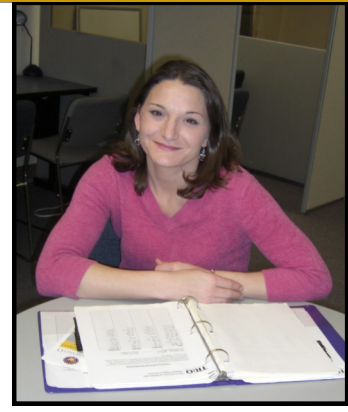
Sade Beck, Junior

As a freshman and first generation college student, I did not know what to expect. However, over the years, I took the knowledge that I was gaining and began to strive for excellence academically. That caused me to become a better student and an aspiring leader. I have come to realize that although I face many challenges and obstacles along this journey, I know that I have to remain focused at all times. My determination to defeat them is greater than the obstacle itself. With the help of SSS, by offering the computer lab, tutoring, academic success workshops, and even words of encouragement has and continues to assist me in becoming closer to my goal of obtaining a degree in Biology. Currently, I am a Junior who is continuing to strive for excellence!

Both Maija Braaten and Jenny Jones agree that Sade is a wonderful student. Says Ms. Braaten, "Sade is conscientious, and works very diligently on her assignments. And [she] always has a smile on her face!"

Student of the Month Criteria

Each month the ASPIRE/SSS stall will nominate a student for showing improvement or achievement in the areas of mentoring, ASPIRE participation, tutoring, academics, etc. The winner will have his or her photograph posted in the display case located outside of the ASPIRE/SSS office, and receive a gift card to Jazzman's Café!



Janice Genry, Sophomore

I am married and have two children ages 7 and 9. I was a high school dropout and a troubled teen; however, I survived! And because of support from those around me, I decided to continue my education when my children were school age. I started at the University of Montevallo in 2006. One thing that has kept me going is the encouragement and support I have received from the SSS staff. They always greet me with a smile, ask about my day, and have offered a great deal of support, knowledge and assistance with my education. If asked what advice I could give to a help other students at the University it would be don't give up, hold your head high, and keep supportive friends around you like the SSS staff!

Says Ms. Braaten, "Janice Genry is one of the hardest working and pleasant students I have had the pleasure of working with in our program. She is always friendly and kind and manages to balance a busy family life with academic success."

I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unrelenting devotion to the things you want to see happen.

**Frank Lloyd Wright
American Architect**



HELP US CELEBRATE FEBRUARY AND MARCH BIRTHDAY BABIES!



February

Jennifer Jenkins
Casey Eversull
Aaron McKinney
Carvetta Cash
Palandria Brand
Josh O'Donnell
Tynisha Dates
Jalaysia Washington
Frank "Trey" Lester
Elicia Parks
Brittany Shaw
Chuck Holderfield
Rachel Daniel
Brandon Greenhill

March

Britania Hutchinson
Christina Davis
RaShunda Evans
Kendra Jones
Tias McLeod
Jackie Morlan
Nashonda Thomas
NeKayla Biggs
Tenisha Hicks
Matthew Rose
Jessica Griggs
Reginald Aguillard
Eric Ripple
Crystal Stantley
Monique Williams

MORE PELL GRANT FUNDING!



The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the economic "stimulus" bill signed by President Obama, included \$15.6 billion for the Pell Grant program. This amount raised the maximum grant award by \$500; as a result, students *could* receive Pell Grant awards of \$5,350 in 2009 and \$5,550 in 2010!

ADVANCING EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY



In late March the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE), a non-profit organization that serves as a liaison between TRiO programs and the U.S. Dept. of Education, will be holding its 29th Annual Policy Seminar. TRiO professionals, student alumni, and current students from all over the country, will go to Washington to share their success stories.

With the new Obama administration in office, members of the TRiO community will have the opportunity to help educate members of the 111th Congress, including new members and new congressional staff, many of whom are not knowledgeable about TRiO, about its history and mission, and to represent the interests of low-income, first-generation, and disabled students in the national policy arena.

Why should this be important to you? Consider that those individuals attending the seminar are doing it to ensure that TRiO programs continue to receive funding, to support *you*. And continued funding of these programs is crucial to providing assistance to others who come *after* you: your brothers or sisters, cousins, or friends in your home community whom you know might benefit from the services we provide, to assist them in not just getting into college, but *staying* in college, and graduating!

All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talent.

John F. Kennedy

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: FALL 2008 GRADUATES!



Olivia Acoff, B.S. Social Work
Dominique Cecil, B.S. Psychology
Jaidrea Ford, B.B.A. Management Information Systems
Rebecca Gardner, B.S. Retail Merchandising
Andrew Hand, B.B.A. Accounting
John Harris, B.S. Biology
Teresa Lively, B.A. Spanish
Claudia McLawhorn, B.S. Social Work
Stefanie Morlan, B.S. Math
Jennifer Restauri, B.F.A. Sculpture
Jennifer Rutledge Talley, B.S. Social Work



Want to be a tutor?



If you have a 3.0 or above and are interested in assisting other ASPIRE/SSS students with core classes, contact the ASPIRE/SSS Office a 205.665.6250 about applying for a position!



Don't seem to have time to do everything?

It is possible to do everything you have to do, and still have plenty of time to do the things you want to do! If you are having trouble, however, perhaps you should take advantage of our time management seminars!

Maija Braaten can provide one-on-one assistance to help you make the most out of your day!

Stop by her office, or contact her at braatenmm@montevallo.edu



GRAMMARPHOBIA: Their, Theirs, There, There's or They're ?

Someone once wrote that bad grammar was the intellectual equivalent of spinach in your teeth. People often judge you by your use of bad grammar, and it can torpedo a paper, an exam, or a potential career. It certainly is one way many employers determine which résumés they can eliminate from the pile--which may not seem very fair, but it is a reality.

If you are a "grammarphobe," take heart, as you are not alone! This is the first of several little articles meant to help you make better grammar choices in your academic writing.

Let's take a look at these words: *They're*, *their*, *theirs*, *there*, and *there's*. These words are typically misused in writing. Here is a little poem by Patricia T. O'Connor, author of *Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*, which succinctly makes the point of when each of these words is used:

THE DINNER GUESTS

They seem to have taken on airs.

They're ever so rude with **their** shares.

They get **there** quite late,

There's a hand in your plate,

And **they're** eating what's not even **theirs**.

Now, here is an explanation:

They're is the shortened form of **they are**:

Example: **They're very late.**

Their and **theirs** are the possessive forms of **they**:

Example: **Their life is theirs alone.**

There means, "in or at that place," as opposed to **here**.

There's is the shortened form of **there is**:

Example: **There's ice in my drink.**

It does take time, patience, and practice, and referring to a dictionary—not relying on the spell/grammar check on your computer—if you are unsure. Soon, you will become a "Grammarphile"!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will ASPIRE/SSS help me while I'm in college?

Once admitted to ASPIRE you and one of our staff will identify and discuss your needs, and then build a customized educational plan of assistance accordingly. While many of our activities are for everyone, such as tutoring, academic or personal advice, cultural events, etc., we also provide appropriate to your development. For instance, most freshmen benefit greatly from learning how to take notes, efficient study and time management skills, etc., and just Sophomores tend to be more concerned about choosing—or reconsidering—a major, writing a résumé, or perhaps looking at internships. As you can see, we work with you in developing useful programming to address what you need or want at the time.

Why is this program only for certain students?

To answer this question it is important to give a little history of its purpose.

The ASPIRE program (Student Support Services) was created under the Higher Education Act of 1965, the objective of which was to provide educational opportunity to individuals who had previously not had access to, or support in, higher education, regardless of race, ethnic background or economic circumstance—specifically, individuals who are either the first in their family to receive a 4-year college degree ("first generation"), come from a low-income background (as determined by the Department of Education), or individuals with disabilities.

It has been an essential component of the Federal strategy to ensure equal education opportunity in America, so that we are a stronger, more competitive nation.