

# TRIO Student Support Services

2021  
Volume 7, Issue 1

## Supporting Students During Covid-19

The COVID pandemic created unprecedented circumstances to our world. It forced us in TRIO -SSS to change how we provide services to students. We went from having only in person meeting options and relying heavily on paper to needing to figure out how to meet our students' needs during these challenging times. The SSS mission became to provide the same level of support and services, just implemented differently. As Fall 2020 came upon us we supported our students by being on-campus, in our offices, and offering both in-person and virtual appointments. It was challenging as we moved furniture to maintain proper social distancing, learned new technology, wore masks, wiped desks, and sanitized pens and other materials. Being flexible in meeting students' needs is an important component of the success of the SSS program, and students consistently commented how much they appreciated being able to meet in our offices and virtually depending on their needs. Throughout the academic year, these positive comments provided the incentive to continue and reinforced that we were doing something right.

Participants were expected to be fully engaged with the program, despite the pandemic. All services were still offered, with the exception of cultural trips, and events that couldn't be safely accommodated in person were offered in a virtual format. In addition to meeting with students individually, we were able to hold our end of semester graduate receptions virtually, we live-streamed workshops, and found ways to participate in virtual and in-person leadership opportunities. It was not an easy feat, but we were able to take a monumental challenge to learn, grow, and change how we approach student support. While most services and events will return to a face to face format in the fall, students will still have the option to schedule virtual appointments. At the end of the year, 86.2% of our survey respondents said they prefer to meet with their SSS advisor in person or both online and in person. The Covid-19 pandemic forced us to evaluate and adapt policies and procedures, some of which created long term changes that will improve the program in the future.

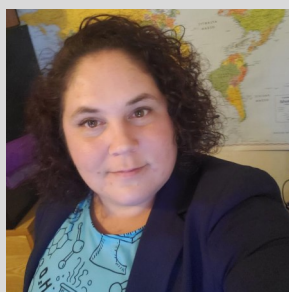


SSS participant Jordan Lyons following proper COVID-19 safety precautions while visiting the SSS office.

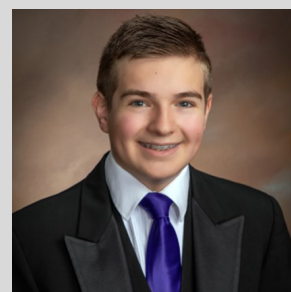
## Award Winners



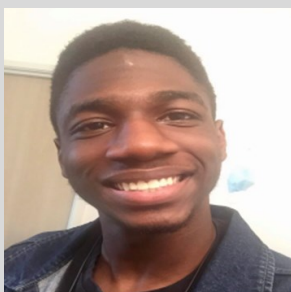
**Bria Johnson**  
Student of the Year



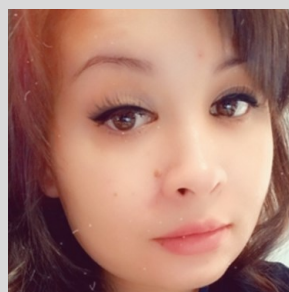
**Eryn Lindsay**  
Outstanding Academic Achievement



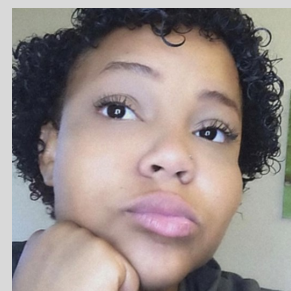
**Lukas O'Brien**  
First Year Student



**Jordan Lyons**  
Contribution to College Life



**Sam Vega**  
Dedication & Persistence



**Abreeya Darda**  
Judith Wolfe Excellence

### SSS Added Peer Mentoring Program

Adjusting to college is a challenge at any time, but especially during a pandemic. We recognized that first year students this year were lacking many of the typical opportunities to engage with campus and connect with others. To help those students, SSS developed a peer mentoring program. First year students were paired with a returning student who was well-adjusted and engaged. Those mentors were trained by SSS staff and a graduate student mentor coordinator. Mentors checked in with their mentees through text message and phone calls, met with them on campus, and attended events together. Due to the success of the program, it will continue for the upcoming academic year.

Our 2020-2021 SSS Mentors were:

- Tyriek Charles
- Abreeya Darda
- Erika Femne
- Tori Gue
- Abigail Hunker
- Bria Johnson
- Gianni Jones
- Syully Koroh
- Jason Knott
- Lyric Mitchell
- Jerri Perry
- Keonte Smith
- Derek Staines
- Shawn Wall
- Abigail Wellings

## Emilee Fierro & Abigail Hunker to Receive SSS Scholarship

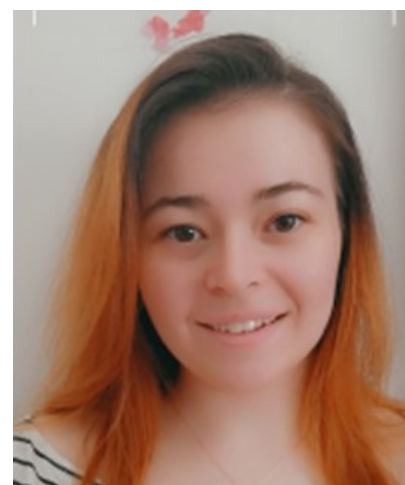
The TRIO Student Support Services scholarship is awarded annually to a student with financial need who is active in SSS and on campus. **Emilee Fierro** was selected to receive the TRIO SSS scholarship in Fall 2021 and **Abigail Hunker** will receive the Spring 2022 scholarship.

Emilee is a senior majoring in Nursing. She finished the requirements to be an RN in May and will complete her bachelor's degree in December 2021. Emilee has been involved extensively on campus and in the community. She was a member of the President's Leadership Circle, ACM Nursing Association, and the FSU track/field and cross country teams. Emilee served on the SSS Executive Board for two years. She has also been a volunteer with youth soccer teams, summer reading programs, after school programs, and the Union Rescue Mission. All of these curricular and extra-curricular accomplishments have been done while also working to support herself.



Emilee Fierro

Abigail is a senior chemistry major who will graduate in May 2022. She is currently the president of the SSS Executive Board. She has also been part of the American Chemical Society, the National Society for Leadership and Success, and the McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program. Abby is doing research on hemp flower DNA isolation optimization with Dr. Crawford and genetic profiling and correlation with chemical constituents in hemp with Dr. Puthoff. Abby is also financially independent and works many hours to finance her education and personal expenses.



Abigail Hunker

### Virtual Leadership Conference

SSS participants had the opportunity to attend the WV TRIO Student Leadership Conference in March 2021. Due to Covid-19, the conference was held virtually. Sessions focused on strengths based leadership, growth mindset vs. fixed mindset, social media awareness, and how to make a difference. FSU's SSS program had 8 students participate in the conference. At the end of the conference, FSU senior **Abigail Hunker** was honored with the Dr. Anne Crum Leadership award.



# TRIO Day Celebrations

Student Support Services is a federally funded TRIO program designed to help first-generation and /or low-income students access and graduate from college. Every year, TRIO programs across the country celebrate TRIO day at the end of February. The SSS student led Executive Board planned events for FSU's SSS participants to celebrate TRIO day this year. Students took pictures with a large first generation photo frame and signed an SSS Family Tree poster.



## Student Success Panel



Tyriek Charles



Abreeya Darda



Abigail Hunker

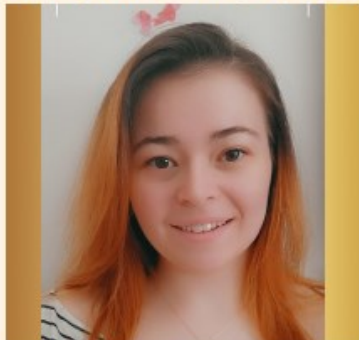


Derek Staines

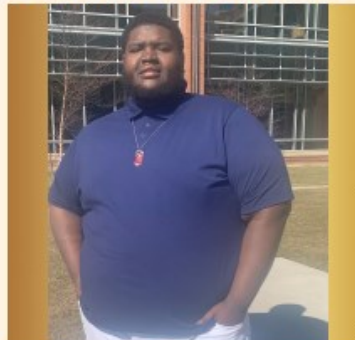
In September 2020, first year SSS participants attended a Student Success Panel where panelists discussed how their experiences as first-generation, low-income college students influenced their success in college. They shared how they overcame personal and academic challenges prior to and throughout college. Due to the ongoing pandemic, this year's panel was held virtually via Webex. Panelists were **Tyriek Charles, Abreeya Darda, Abigail Hunker, and Derek Staines.**

## SSS 2021 Executive Board

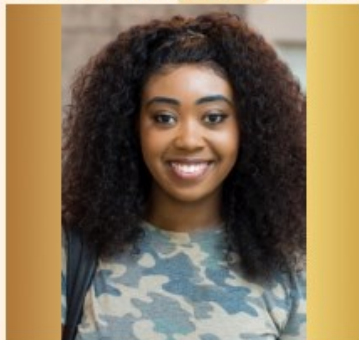
*President*  
**ABIGAIL HUNKER**



*Vice President*  
**KEONTE SMITH**



*Secretary*  
**TORI FRANKLIN**



*Public Relations*  
**TAINA CAJIGAS**



133 Pullen Hall  
301-687-4481  
[sss@frostburg.edu](mailto:sss@frostburg.edu)



**Like us on Facebook!**  
Student Support Services  
Frostburg State University

## SSS Staff

Tamara Lowry, Director  
Don Maxwell, Math Specialist  
Shawn Jones, Student Development Specialist  
Holly Clark, Student Development Specialist  
Bridgette Karalewitz, Administrative Assistant