SSS Enriches the WVU Tech Student Experience

via WVU Tech University Relations

The Student Support Services (SSS) program, a federal TRIO program funded by the United States Department of Education, has been enhancing the student experience at WVU Tech since 1971, making it one of the oldest programs of its kind in the nation.

Known for their tutoring services, professional and academic development programs, free printing and computer lab, the program is dedicated to helping students navigate college life in and out of the classroom. Student Support Services Director Scott Robertson says the program is working, and the statistics back him up.

Each year, the program provides an annual performance report to the US Department of Education detailing program success factors such as graduation rates and academic standing. When the current operating grant was approved in 2009, the program was required to maintain a persistence rate (year-to-year program retention) of 65%, a 40% graduation rate for students who entered college in the 2008-2009 academic year, and a 65% rate of students in good academic standing.

In this year’s report, the program shared information on more than 500 program students from the last six years, coming in well above those thresholds and boasting a 46% graduation rate, a 90% program persistence rate and an impressive 92% of program students in good academic standing.

“Those are pretty phenomenal numbers for our program and they show that Student Support Services is doing exactly what it is supposed to be doing. It’s helping students,” said Robertson. Robertson, a program alumnus himself, attributes much of this success to SSS’s robust tutoring and advising efforts. Students in the program meet with staff counselors once a month to make sure that things are going well, and students have access to a wide range of subjects in which to receive tutoring.

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College of Engineering and Sciences Recognizes Outstanding STEM Students

via WVU Tech University Relations

On Tuesday, April 21, more than 150 students, staff, faculty and family members gathered in the WVU Tech Ballroom for the 18th annual STEM Awards Banquet. At this year’s event, more than 40 students were recognized for their academic work as well as their involvement in student organizations.

“This is a group of students who are very bright and very committed to their academic pursuits, the research they undertake and the student organizations they devote their time to,” said Dr. Zeljko “Z” Torbica, dean of the Leonard C. Nelson College of Engineering and Sciences at WVU Tech. “They have consistently exceeded expectations throughout the year and we honor them for both their work and for the way their efforts help to define the unique culture of the engineering and science programs at WVU Tech.” The following SSS participants were recognized at the event:

**Biology**
John Swain – Biology Research Award

**Chemical Engineering**
Angel Thompson – AIChE Leadership Award for outstanding service to the student chapter

**Chemistry**
John Swain – Outstanding Research Achievement Award

**Civil Engineering**
Taofik Mudasiru – Outstanding Civil Engineering Sophomore Award

**Electrical and Computer Engineering**
Joseph Ferguson – Outstanding Electrical Engineering Student Award
William Higginbotham – Outstanding Electrical Engineering Student Award

**Engineering Technology**
Daniel Hull – For Contributions to the Engineering Technology Department

**Mechanical Engineering**
Tavon Johnson – Leadership in Organizing LCNCES Engineering Design Exposition and Technical Conference

![William Higginbotham](image1)
![Angel Thompson](image2)
![Taofik Mudasiru](image3)
![Tavon Johnson](image4)
SGA and Dean of Students Honor Outstanding Students

via WVU Tech University Relations

The WVU Tech Student Government Association hosted its last meeting of the 2014-2015 academic year on Tuesday, April 28 to wrap up the year’s business and thank the 2014-2015 officers for their work.

“We’re proud to mark another successful year of fulfilling our commitment to student leadership opportunities and engaging student activities, and are grateful for the work of student leaders in SGA and other campus student organizations,” said Dean of Students Richard Carpinelli.

The meeting also saw the swearing in of new officers to serve in the 2015-2016 academic year, including Student Support Services participants Janet Cunningham as Vice President and Tavon Johnson, Shella (Gabby) Kelley, Lesli Taylor and Jacob Lovejoy as senators.

Afterward, the Dean and the SGA recognized Brittany Doran with the Outstanding Student Leader Award for her work with the SGA and the student body. “The outstanding students, faculty and staff honored at the leadership recognition ceremony were selected for their leadership, dedication to student life and their unwavering pride in what it means to be a member of the WVU Tech community,” he said.

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“If it weren’t for the program, I wouldn’t have the college degrees I have now. So, for me personally, it’s very important that we offer these services. We’ve seen students who have so much potential and we’re here to help pull that potential out in order to see that they are successful not just within our program, but also at WVU Tech.”

Beyond academics, the program offers a number of cultural enrichment and professional development opportunities. On February 4th, the program took 26 students to Charleston for a night of exposure to Asian culture and cuisine. The group attended Shen Yu – a live performance portraying traditional Chinese culture through music and dance – at the Clay Center for the arts. “Our cultural enrichment programs are an important part of our holistic approach to student success,” said Robertson. “Seeing Shen Yu was an experience these students will not soon forget. These events allow students to realize that a degree affords them the opportunity to continue doing those things down the road.” The program also provides scholarships for qualifying students, and awarded 19 scholarships totaling more than $26,000 for the spring 2015 semester alone.

In addition to cultural activities, the program will host a number of professional/personal development seminars this spring, including workshops on time management and maintaining healthy relationships, as well as a financial aid “boot camp” where students who answer questions incorrectly will have to perform physical exercises.

Robertson said these activities and the SSS’s open-door policy creates a space where program students can support one another as they work toward common goals. “We’ve seen a lot of friendships being built, even with students who are commuters,” he said. “We’re creating a community within the program and within our office. We have people from all over the world and all walks of life. It’s great to see these students interacting and helping one another.”
WVU Tech Dean’s List

The following students earned a 3.25 grade point average (GPA) or higher during the Fall 2014 and/or Spring 2015 semesters in their respective coursework. We are very proud of their accomplishments!

**Fall 2014**

- Kaleb Acree
- Lawrence Allphin
- Chelcee Amos
- Angelica Arellano
- Zachary Armstead
- Marcella Baisden
- Johnathon Ballard
- Megan Blythe
- Ashley Boggs
- Tori Bragg
- Andrew Brenner
- Jonathan Clark
- Kelley Coleman
- Thomas Dodd
- Brittany Doran
- Cathy Estes-Zones
- Joseph Ferguson
- Drew Fields
- Aquila Fox
- Victor Garcia
- Hunter Gray
- Gracyn Grubb
- Taylor Hager
- Allison Hall
- William Hamrick
- Sheng Han
- Eddie Harris
- William Higginbotham
- KyAnne Holman
- Zachary Hornsby
- Daniel Hull
- Christopher Ingram
- Brandy Jarvis
- Tavon Johnson
- Shella Kelley
- Jacob Lovejoy
- DeAnna Lucas
- Allison Morris
- Nia Nolan
- Estefania Ortiz
- Michael Sansone
- Crystal Spurlock
- Samuel Stone
- John Swain
- Lesli Taylor
- Adam Teator
- Suman Thapa
- Angel Thompson
- Genna Trippett
- Sarah Waldeck
- Brianna Whaley
- Shannon Wiercioch
- Rodney Wills
- RoChe Wimberly
- Amy Young

**Spring 2015**

- Kaleb Acree
- Courtney Adkins
- Brittney Alcorn
- Lawrence Allphin
- Angelica Arellano
- Daniel Beverly
- Tori Bragg
- Andrew Brenner
- Roger Bright
- Michele Carena
- Kelley Coleman
- Patric Devereaux
- Brittany Doran
- Joseph Ferguson
- Drew Fields
- Rubhi Garcia
- Hunter Gray
- Taylor Hager
- William Higginbotham
- Jonathan Holcomb
- KyAnee Holman
- Daniel Hull
- Brandy Jarvis
- Christopher Jenkins
- Tavon Johnson
- Shella Kelley
- Ra'Shaud Kincaid
- Joshua Kinsel
- Amber Linville
- Jacob Lovejoy
- Olivia Mantohbang
- Jacob Marshall
- Joshua McCoy
- Hunter Moles
- Allison Morris
- Nia Nolan
- Nathaniel Nottingham
- Mohamed Noufal
- Nicole Pennington
- John Perrow
- Michael Perrow
- Matthew Pittman
- Liz Pressman
- Fernando Rivero
- Colton Rowe
- Kimberly Rush
- Gurdir Singh
- Crystal Spurlock
- Samuel Stone
- Scotty Stone
- John Swain
- Shelby Swiney
- Lesli Taylor
- Adam Teator
- Suman Thapa
- Angel Thompson
- Genna Trippett
- James Waldeck
- Sarah Waldeck
- Brianna Whaley
- Shannon Wiercioch
SSS Graduates

The following students received their diplomas during the 2015 Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, May 9, 2015 in the Neal D. Baisi Athletic Center on the Tech Campus.

**Leonard C. Nelson College of Engineering and Sciences**  
Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree

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<tr>
<th>Chemical Engineering</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Swain</td>
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<td>Angel Thompson</td>
<td>Garron Ross</td>
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<td>Kaleb Acree</td>
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<td>Andrew Brenner</td>
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<td>Brittany Doran</td>
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<td>Michael Perrow</td>
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<td>Drew Fields</td>
<td>Emily Geldbach</td>
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<td>William Higginbotham</td>
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<td>Josh McCoy</td>
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<td>Jonathan Ballard</td>
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<td>Floyd Campbell</td>
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<td>Terrale Clark</td>
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<td>Jermaine Gadson</td>
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<td>Mashya White</td>
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<td>RoChe’ Wimberly</td>
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<td>Rebecca Yost</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Aquila Fox</td>
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<td>Athletic Coaching Education</td>
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<td>Craig Moore</td>
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<td>Nia Nolan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree Forensic Investigation</td>
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<td>Brittney Alcorn</td>
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<td>Health Services Administration</td>
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<td>Jennifer Gill</td>
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<td>John Perrow</td>
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<th>West Virginia University School of Nursing</th>
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<td>Brandy Jarvis</td>
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<td>Christopher Jenkins</td>
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<td>Deanna Lucas</td>
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<td>Nicole Pennington</td>
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WVU Tech Sibling Soccer Players Graduate

by Kitty Palausky, SSS Counselor

Enthusiastic WVU Tech Soccer Players and brothers Michael and John “Benji” Perrow graduated from WVU Tech on May 9, 2015 and have very different career goals. Michael earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering and already has a job and hopes to work in Colombia. Benji graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Health Service Administration and is now pursuing a degree in nursing. Benji still lives in Montgomery.

The Perrow family lives in Colombia, where their parents, Bill and Wanda, are missionaries. Bill’s home church is Perrow Church in Cross Lanes. Bill grew up here and the family has a home here.

Wanda is from Puerto Rico, and together Bill and Wanda founded and direct “Open Arms Foundation” on the outskirts of Medellin, a large city in Colombia. The Perrow’s have two other children. Marcos went to Marshall University in Huntington, WV and Clara is in elementary school.

Another important piece of this story is that Dr. Jan Rezek, Director of Social Sciences and Public Administration here at WVU Tech helped recruit the brothers to Tech. This happened because Dr. Rezek spent parts of over fifteen summers in Columbia doing missionary work with Michael and Benji’s parents.
On Thursday, April 23, more than 20 teams of WVU Tech engineering students showcased a variety of design projects during the first WVU Tech College of Engineering Design Exposition.

The expo featured class and senior capstone projects – some of them more than a year in the making – from mechanical, chemical, electrical and civil engineering students. Attendees were able to visit poster displays and discuss project plans, models or prototypes with exhibitors.

Dr. Farshid Zabihian, the expo’s organizer and assistant professor in the WVU Tech Department of Mechanical Engineering, said that the goal of the exposition was to recognize students for the time and work they put into these important projects that often serve as the culmination of an engineering student’s undergraduate career.

“Many of our students are doing very good work that goes beyond expectations for a student capstone project. Outside of the classroom, many of these projects are unnoticed,” he said.

“Another part of this is generational. Freshmen, sophomore and junior students have an opportunity to visit this expo to see what others are doing, hopefully get inspired, make more informed decisions and prepare themselves for the topics they find interesting,” he said.

Dr. Zabihian said that he hopes to continue the expo on an annual basis and incorporate more elements, such as high school visits and award categories, into future expositions.

The exposition was hosted by the WVU Tech Department of Mechanical Engineering and coordinated by students Raul Torres and SSS participant, Tavon Johnson.
Renter's Insurance - Better Safe Than Sorry

by Scott Robertson, SSS Director

Whether you are living on campus this fall or in an apartment, the SSS office would recommend that you seek out renter's insurance for your belongings. If your parents or guardians have a home insurance policy, have them check into renter’s insurance for you. In many cases, the additional insurance will run anywhere from $10-$20 but the added piece of mind will be worth it in case something were to happen to your belongings.

I lost a majority of my belongings in an apartment fire in 2007 and did not have renter’s insurance. Thankfully I was able to bounce back with support from family and friends. However, I would recommend that you look into renter’s insurance for your piece of mind. As we saw at the end of the spring semester when three recent Tech graduates lost everything in an apartment fire in Montgomery, we never know what can happen.

To stay up to date on what is going on in the SSS office, make sure you follow us online!