

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Update

October 2008

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Maria D. Martinez, Director, Center for Academic Programs

On October 20, 2007, the Center for Academic Programs hosted a gala to celebrate 40 years of the Center providing quality service and programming to students. This Anniversary Celebration was a wonderful opportunity to recognize the tremendous success of our alumni and the commitment and dedication of past members of our staff. We were excited to see many familiar faces and, with around 200 guests in attendance, it was truly a celebratory evening. The Center was also honored to have Dr. Franklin Chang-Diaz, UConn CAP alum and the first Hispanic NASA astronaut, to serve as the keynote speaker. Dr. Valerie Lewis, former Connecticut Commissioner of Higher Education, provided brief remarks to the audience and Dr. Veronica Makowsky, Vice Provost of Academic Affairs and Regional Campus Administration delivered a warm welcome to all. Inspired by the success of the 40th Anniversary event, Upward Bound/CONNCAP has created its own Alumni Association. They have already held several receptions and continue to reach out to more Upward Bound alums. I invite you to look for more information and photos from these exciting and memorable events!

The Center's staff continues engaging students in conversations about study abroad possibilities and advocating for their participation. Eleven SSS students were able to take part in the SSS Liverpool Study Abroad Program this year. We have also solidified our partnership with the Office of Study Abroad on campus; hence creating additional funding opportunities for our students to study anywhere in the world! Now, not only are our students eagerly taking advantage of the SSS Study Abroad Program in Liverpool, but many are independently choosing to participate in traditional study abroad programs. Our appreciation goes to Dr. Ross Lewin for

supporting our efforts to create new study abroad opportunities for the SSS students.

All of our programs have successfully completed their summer sessions. Upward Bound/ConnCAP had 100 high school students on the Storrs campus; Educational Talent Search and GEAR UP combined their summer programs to serve 72 students in Windham and New Haven; and SSS had a total of 306 students participating in Storrs and all the regional campuses. This summer marked the second consecutive year that ETS, in collaboration with GEAR UP, held and completed a four week summer program for both middle and high school students. The first ever Windham program at Windham Middle School was launched and was very well received. This summer program is yet another example of CAP's commitment to outreaching to the various communities throughout the state.

CAP is very pleased to welcome our alumni back to UConn now as full-time employees. Alfred Guante, a 2005 SSS graduate, joined the GEAR UP project as a program assistant in July 2008. Also, Jose Ramos, a 2004 graduate, accepted the position of the program coordinator for STRONG-CT in the Department of Nutritional Sciences. Noemi Maldonado, a 2002 graduate, is now a program advisor in the Neag School of Education. I invite you to read more about the successes of CAP alumni and see a listing of the recent SSS graduates inside.

Other highlights of this past year include the establishment of various scholarships including one for SSS Greater Hartford students and the Kollin DeNegre Memorial Scholarship in Torrington. CAP recognized the academic success of SSS students who have achieved a 3.0 GPA at the annual SSS Award Ceremony. Awards were also presented to Kwaku Ayebi-Awuah for Peer

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Advisor of the Year and UConn professor Michael Bradford for SSS Faculty/Staff of the Year as recognition for their commitments to servicing students in the SSS program. The University's First Year Experience (FYE) Instructor of the Year Award was presented to Carl Dean, counselor in Student Support Services. In addition, Connecticut State Representative Kenneth Green, an alum of the CONNPEP Upward Bound program, recently received the 2008 National TRIO Achievers Award at the 27th Annual Conference of the Council for Opportunity in Education in Washington, D.C. I encourage you to read more detailed articles on these achievements inside the newsletter.

I extend my sincere congratulations to all of our graduates! I want to thank the University community for staying actively involved in our initiatives. My gratitude goes to CAP staff members who consistently take on additional projects and assignments and remain committed to the students' success. To continue the "alumni theme" of the year, this newsletter will focus on the success and accomplishments of our current and former students. We hope you enjoy it.

SSS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Student Support Services (SSS) held its third annual Leadership Conference this past summer. The theme for this year's event was "Preparing for Your Passion." The conference featured many dynamic speakers. Andy McGadney, Vice President of University Advancement at Clark University, spoke on the importance of self leadership which is important for developing the skills to effectively lead and manage others. Marisa Sullivan, HESA Graduate Student, under the Leadership Development Department in Student Activities, gave a presentation on the importance of making your mark, helping others, and creating a legacy at the university. This year, current SSS students were added as panelists to discuss the great activities they are in-

involved in to enhance their leadership, academic, and personal development. All four students studied abroad and two are involved in the prestigious Legacy program. SSS alumni, Desi Nesmith, 2004 Teacher of the Year recipient and chemist, Jose Santana, provided valuable information on dedication to pursuing and excelling in your passions. The conference also featured an opening social reception and banquet dinner with an etiquette workshop facilitated by Counselor Leo Lachut. There were ap-



proximately 40 students who attended the conference. Many of the returnees felt this was the best conference to date.

COE TRIO ACHIEVER AWARD



The University of Connecticut's Center for Academic Programs is proud to announce that Connecticut State Representative Kenneth Green was selected to receive the 2008 National TRIO Achievers Award at the 27th Annual Conference of the Council for Opportunity in Education in Washington, D.C. Ken Green is well known to the UConn family through his political and social work and because he began his educational career at UConn in the CONNPEP Upward Bound program. From there, he went on to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Hampshire College School of Social Sciences in 1975 and returned to the University of Connecticut to complete his Master's Degree in Social Work in 1979. He was nominated and selected for this award because of his tireless work on behalf of the community.

Rep. Green's commitment to the Bloomfield and Hartford First Assembly District can be seen through his 14 years of service as a legislator, as a past Chairman of Connecticut's Legislative Black and Puerto Rican Caucus and as a participant on the Hartford Democratic Town Committee. In addition to his legislative responsibilities, Ken is also a social worker at the Polaris School of the Capitol Region Education Council. He continuously demonstrates his sincere concern for the youth of his community. His commitment to the youth population is evident in his work to create and sponsor the "Youth Prevention Summit," a bi-annual event bringing young people together to discuss current issues affecting their lives. He has also worked with the Jesse Jackson Campaign to Rebuild America and has been involved with the "Always on Saturday" program. "Always on Saturday" is a nationally recognized teen pregnancy prevention program that has operated in Hartford's neighborhoods for over 20 years. Ken's involvement in the program shows his dedication to helping Hartford's youth develop positive life directions and goals. In particular, this program exposes young males to information on sexuality, bolsters their self-esteem and helps them to gain positive decision-making skills.

Ken continues to remain involved with the Upward Bound program. The staff at

UConn's Center for Academic Programs can always count on him to visit campus and to give motivational talks to our students. He has been a great inspiration to our student body by encouraging students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities.

Rep. Green has received numerous awards and accolades for his commitment to his community, education and the support and development of Connecticut's youth. These awards include the *Community Enrichment Award*; the *Outstanding Service to Community Award* from the Connecticut National Guard in honor of Black History Month; the *Ujima Award* from Capital Community-Technical College for the betterment of families and the community; the *Spirit of Scouting Award* for exemplary service to low-income urban youth; as well as awards from both Connecticut Association of Educational Opportunity Programs (CAEOP) and the New England Educational Opportunity Association (NEOA). Ken can now add another award to his already impressive résumé. Past recipients of the prestigious National TRIO Achievers Award include UConn CAP alumnus, Dr. Franklin Chang-Diaz, the first Hispanic NASA astronaut and Alex J. Martinez, a successful Stamford attorney and advocate.

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS ALUMNI UPDATES

Upward Bound

Class of 2001

Joshua Aleman, Southern Connecticut State University
Jeanie Castings, Teikyo Post University
Katrina Williams, University of Connecticut

Class of 2002

Alex Jones, University of Maine
Carla Ward, Quinnipiac University
Darissa Monroe, Eastern Connecticut State University

Class of 2003

Shelby Davis, Western Connecticut State University
Andrew Lavana, University of Connecticut
Renee Martin, University of Connecticut.

Class of 2004

Audrene Dias, University of Connecticut
Shaun Levy, University of Connecticut
Samantha Smith, Trinity College

Class of 2005

Jamie Bhairo, Western Connecticut State University
Frances Dipini, St. Joseph College
Melissa Yennie, Central Connecticut State University

Class of 2006

Vahide Bytyqi, Western Connecticut State University
Shanakay Batton, University of Hartford
Nicole Forzano, Elms College

Student Support Services

Class of 1998

Alexandra Garces, BA Individualized



Recently Alexandra received her Doctorate in Naturopathic Medicine and is currently a candidate for her license in Connecticut. Dr. Garces also received her Master's degree in clinical nutrition. She is currently employed at the Natural Health and Wellness Center in Milford, CT. She plans to join a practice and to specialize in pediatrics, homeopathy, and nutritional counseling.

Class of 2002

Noemi Maldonado, BS Human Development and Family Studies

After having worked for the Center as a tutor and coordinator for Educational Talent Search, Noemi joined the Upward Bound Program as a Program Advisor in 2005. In summer 2008, Noemi returned to the University as an Academic Advisor at the Neag School of Education where she will focus on minority recruitment and retention, pre-education advising, and coordination of the peer education program. Noemi received her master's in Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania.

Class of 2003

Danielle Watson, BS Agriculture and Natural Resources

Danielle completed her Juris Doctor from the University of Connecticut School of Law in May 2008. She resides in Washington, D.C. and recently sat for the



Maryland Bar Exam. In September, she will wed Mark Tidman, a Washington, D.C. native. She plans to begin her career as an attorney when she returns from her honeymoon in October.

Class of 2004

Jose Luis Ramos, BS Human Development and Family Studies

Since graduating, Jose has worked for the Trust House Family Learning Center in Hartford, CT. First as a case manager and then as a Community Coordinator, he provided direct service and advocacy for residents of Hartford's Dutch Point Housing Project. Recently, Jose returned to UConn as the Program Coordinator for the STRONG-CT Program in the Department of Nutritional Sciences.

Class of 2005

Alfred Guante, BA Spanish



Alfred is now not just an alum of TRIO; he is also an employee for the UConn GEAR UP program. This past summer, he worked with the program's new 9th

grade students and upcoming sophomores and juniors. Additionally, he led workshops in areas of goal setting, the high school transition, and career development. Alfred recently monitored an overnight college trip to Columbia University in New York and to Rutgers University in New Jersey.

SSS STAFF MEMBER HONORED AS FYE INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR

Carl Dean, a Counselor for Student Support Services, received the University's First Year Experience (FYE) Instructor of the Year Award. Carl teaches three FYE classes, all of which focus on pushing students to work outside of their comfort zone for personal and academic development and growth.

In his Peer Involvement class, Carl strives to create synergies among the students encouraging them to interact with one another, to think outside the box and

to remove thoughts of "why it won't work" and replace them with "how can we make it work". Students from various cultural and economic backgrounds, ethnicities and beliefs form one unit to work on a common goal. Former classes have shipped supplies to wounded soldiers in Iraq and have raised hundreds of dollars to support community organizations working with children who have serious illnesses and with families who have a member with HIV or AIDS.

Since its creation, many students gravitate to Carl's Performance Poetry class for an opportunity to express themselves artistically despite the fear of speaking in public. An environment is created where students encourage and support one another to work through their fears by empowering them to recite and perform. Carl stated, "There is a tremendous joy to see students become involved in various diverse organizations throughout the university enhancing the campus experience for everyone."

ETS WINDHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAM: A HUGE SUCCESS!

This year the Educational Talent Search (ETS) program provided its first summer program for students in the Windham area. The program was held at Windham Middle School in Willimantic, Connecticut and serviced rising 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students. Classes were held for four weeks and focused on the academic skills students need to succeed in high school. Combined with the academic program was a social development component that challenged students to confront fears, obstacles, and differences. Students had the opportunity to learn about cultural appreciation, team building, and to experience personal growth and exploration. Students wrote and read their own poetry and participated in career exploration exercises. Friday trips



included a visit to Pine Lakes Challenge course where students participated in team building activities and a visit to the University of Connecticut- Storrs Campus

where they ate at Northwest Dining Hall and visited the School of Pharmacy, the Burton Family Football Complex, the Kellogg Dairy Farm and the Horse barn.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR SSS GREATER HARTFORD STUDENTS

On August 7th the Student Support Services program at the Greater Hartford campus celebrated the successful completion of the 2008 summer pre-collegiate program with its annual ceremony. This year there was an exciting addition to the ceremony's usual program. The Director of Student Development for the UConn

Greater Hartford campus, Nadine Brennan, announced that the Board of the Greater Hartford chapter of the UConn Alumni Association, initiated by Ms. Sara Titus, had created a new scholarship program for incoming SSS freshmen. This program will award six students a \$200 book scholarship each year. Based

on their performance over the six week pre-collegiate SSS program, the following students received the scholarship for 2008: Vanessa Adu-Baffour, Catherine Byun, Diana Cortavarria, Maribel Garcia, Quenton Narcisse, and Tamarah Swan.

HUNGER FOR CHANGE: UPWARD BOUND STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE HONOR SOCIETY STUDENTS' CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



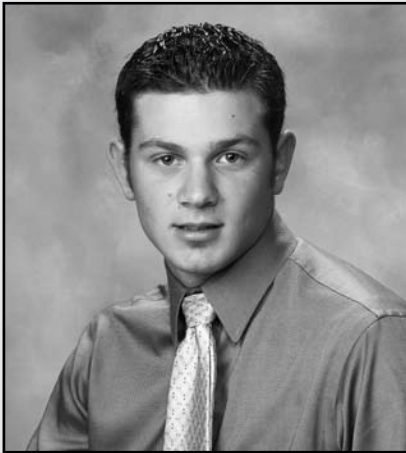
Saturday, April 5th began as a rainy, dreary day; however, once we were all inside the Bishop Center, the day began to brighten. Honor Society Students from the University of Connecticut organized an Academic Day for Upward Bound (UB) students. The group, led by Alex Bonneau

and Chelsea, invited UB students to participate in the ConnPIRG's (Connecticut Public Interest Research Group) Hungry for Change Conference.

This conference was formed to bring homelessness awareness to Connecticut students of all ages. Students from high schools in surrounding towns, including Willimantic and Hartford, were invited to attend and discuss hunger issues. UB student Shaquana Cochran, who attended the conference, writes "I thought that it was a good academic day - teaming up with college students. Coming in, I did not know that people who work in sweatshops earn so

little pay for the hard work they do. Also I didn't know there were so many homeless people in the United States and [that they] have little rights as people. Many teenagers are attacking homeless people because they feel that they are at the bottom of the social class. Overall the speakers were very good." Another student, Anthony Brown notes "On Saturday, we had a good time at the UConn campus. [It taught us that our being unable to aid and feed the homeless is a crime.] Overall I found it very informative and it encourages me to make a difference."

FOUNDING OF THE KOLLIN DENEGRE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



The Center for Academic Programs and the UConn community was saddened by the tragic death of UConn SSS Torrington student Kollin DeNegre this past year. Kollin had only recently completed the SSS summer pre-collegiate program before he passed away. Part of the impetus to establish the scholarship came from DeNegre's newfound interest in school, which his family credits to his experience in the Student Support Services (SSS) program. "Kollin really, really, benefited from the program," said Torrington SSS program coordinator Christine Mosman,

who was DeNegre's counselor in the program. "He said to me, 'I finally got it.'" The DeNegre family and community created a Memorial Scholarship in his name to support a UConn Torrington student demonstrating engagement in community service, as well as merit and need with priority being given to students who have attended the SSS program. In fact, the first recipient of the award was Kollin's classmate and SSS student Allie Tartaglino, who is now entering her sophomore year as a Human Development and Family Services major.

THE UPWARD BOUND ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SEEKS NEW RECRUITS

The newly established Upward Bound Alumni Association (UBAA) is looking for volunteers. The Association's first president, Shaun Levy, is sending out a call for alumni to become involved with the board or to become members. This fall, the Association enters its second year and has already had two successful alumni receptions. The first reception, "Rekindling Connections" was held last fall 2007. At this event, Beasha

that highlighted how they benefited from opportunities at the graduate level.



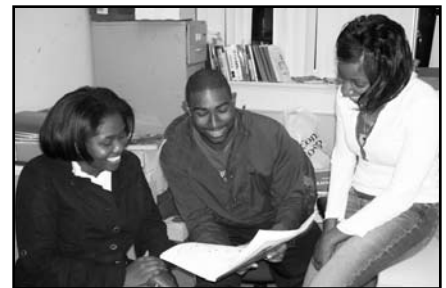
The second alumni reception, sponsored by the UBAA, was held this past spring. We reconnected with our alumni and listened to a presentation on study abroad opportunities. SSS graduating senior, Jeff Ambrose spoke to UB alumni about the SSS Liverpool Study Tour to England. Shaun Levy, UBAA President, also spoke about his experience in South Africa. UB alumni from all cities were present in the audience. After the discussion, the UB alumni went to Willi Bowl for an enjoyable afternoon

and reminisced about old times!

Please consider contributing to this legacy. If you are looking to get involved in the organization or would like to volunteer, you can contact us at: UB.alumni@gmail.com. For individuals who are Internet and Facebook savvy, feel free to join our group: The Official Upward Bound Alumni Association.



P. Barlette, gave a true-to-life account of her graduate school experience. UB staff members Susana Ulloa, Clifford Marrett, and Lisa Brasile complemented her presentation by providing their own personal graduate school experiences



EDUCATIONAL TALENT SEARCH ALUM GOES TO GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Toddchelle Young began her first year at Georgetown University on a full academic scholarship. She intends to earn her Bachelor's Degree in Biology and plans to attend medical school. Toddchelle was the 2007-2008 James Hillhouse High School valedictorian. She graduated with a 3.95 GPA, was a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish Honor Society. Toddchelle was acclaimed "Youth of the Year" at the state capitol by the African-American Affairs Commission

and was recognized by the Connecticut Association for Public School Superintendents and the New Haven Board of Education during American Education Week.

Toddchelle understands the importance of giving back to her community and has invested her time as a member of the Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership (LEAP) organization by tutoring and mentoring children of New Haven, Connecticut. Toddchelle is also



an Emergency Medical Technician and has utilized her certification to volunteer as an EMT with the New Haven Fire Department's Emergency Unit.

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS CELEBRATES ITS

40th Anniversary

On October 20, 2007, the Center for Academic Programs held its 40th Anniversary Celebration at the Rocky Hill Marriott in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. "Celebrating a Tradition of Student Success" was the theme for the event. Over 200 CAP alums, former and current staff, guests, and University administrators joined Dr. Maria D. Martinez, CAP Director, in celebrating the Center's achievements and long history of serving underrepresented populations, low-income, and first generation to college students. The evening served as a special opportunity for alumni to reunite with friends and supporters who had been so inspirational to them during their participation in CAP programs and throughout their lives.

The celebration also provided an opportunity to recognize individuals who have supported our programs. The Center for Academic Programs presented six awards

to the following individuals: John C. Norman, Iris Kinnard, H. Fred Simons, Alma E. Maldonado-Corder, Dr. David G. Carter Sr., and the late Carolyn McDew. These six individuals were recognized for their outstanding commitment and dedication in working with low income and first generation to college students demonstrated over the past 40 years.

Many distinguished guests had the opportunity to share their experience with the programs at the reception. Dr. Veronica Makowsky, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Regional Campus Administration welcomed the guests to this festive event. Dr. Franklin Chang-Diaz, UConn CAP alum and the first Hispanic NASA astronaut provided the keynote address. He spoke about how he was able

to accomplish his dream of becoming an astronaut and how his SSS counselor, the late Ms. Carolyn McDew, played a critical role in his decision to come to UConn; she recruited him and taught him how to navigate the college admissions process. Dr. Valerie Lewis, former Connecticut Commissioner of Higher Education, also addressed the audience.

The 40th Anniversary Gala was a big success! The Center looks forward to continue working with many more students in years to come and to provide them with the opportunity to enroll and graduate from college and realize their dreams. Enjoy the 40th anniversary pictures included in this edition of the newsletter.

READY FOR ANYTHING? MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE UPWARD BOUND SUMMER COMPONENT

By Lisa Brasile

When I was hired as an Upward Bound Advisor last November, my new CAP colleagues frequently mentioned Upward Bound's summer program, always with a smile, but it never ended there. I would never know what it was like, they would offer, until I had lived through the six weeks of residential life with over one hundred high school teenagers. After months and months of planning, working, preparing, and moving, I was finally in my room ready for anything!

Upward Bound students from Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, and Windham arrived on the University of Connecticut Storrs Campus in mid-June.



For the next month and a half, they lived in the Northwest Residence Halls and attended class across the street in the Math/Science Building. There, they began extremely rigorous high school preparatory classes to introduce them to course material they would encounter in their own high schools the subsequent year. After a full day of classes, the students had enough time to eat dinner and participate in scheduled activities and sports before they returned to attend study hall. The long school weeks were broken up by field trips on Wednesdays in addition to the weekend trips back home. The students worked extremely hard and followed many, many rules. However a group of sophomores told me that, "Even though we work so hard and get really tired and cranky with each other, it will be worth it when we get back to school this fall."

I can't say that I don't need a vacation, and in the end my students did (almost) make me cry, but not because they were



terrifying teens. During our touching Thursday Hall of Fame, the senior students clapped and cheered proudly for their sophomore peers, new to the program, and now extremely welcomed. On the emotional basketball courts, beginners were given as much playing time and respect as the "All-Stars." And of course the beautiful graduation ceremony, after which, the seniors said their final teary good-byes to the Northwest residence halls and their UB summer family.

It is hard to believe the summer program has gone by so quickly. Fortunately, I can classify *my* first summer with Upward Bound as "Exciting" and relax a minute before preparations for the fall begin.

40th Anniversary



BEGINNING AND ENDING AT UCONN AVERY POINT

By: Mikhail Liachenko



I recently graduated from UConn because of my own diligent efforts and because of the support that I found from joining SSS in 2004 at UConn Avery Point. When I first arrived in this country, in early 2001, I enrolled in Fitch High School in Groton, CT. There, I took part in ESOL services, which helped me throughout my four years in high school. As I prepared to graduate from high school, I knew that I was prepared for college; however, I felt I would still benefit from some kind of academic assistance similar to my support in high school. I was delighted to have been accepted into the SSS program for

the summer of 2004. The SSS program, the tutors, specifically Elizabeth Kading, and my advisor, Marcia Orcutt, helped me adjust to college by improving my writing, math, and overall study skills to become a more effective student.

SSS taught me how to be successful in a school setting and how to give back to the community. In 2004, I tutored a group of at-risk middle school students at West Side Middle

School in Groton, CT with my advisor and a few of my friends. Every Friday morning, we went to West Side to meet with our students to help them with homework, play games, and act as big brothers & sisters to them. We continued to mentor these students for two years until I transferred to Storrs for my junior year.

After being in the SSS program for two years, I felt fully prepared to go to Storrs. I was thankful that I could always rely on the Storrs SSS counselors if I ever needed academic support or other assistance.

During the fall semester of my senior year at UConn Storrs, I realized that Avery Point had all the classes that I needed to complete by degree. Therefore, I decided to return to UConn Avery Point for my final semester. During my last semester at UConn, I was also interning at CBS News in New York City. I am grateful that my advisor, Marcia Orcutt, and older SSS students encouraged me to seek this internship opportunity for hands-on experience. My SSS tutor, Elizabeth Kading, helped me to write a winning essay to the internship committee that helped me to secure a coveted internship position.

Overall, the SSS program has helped me in countless ways – and I've used its resources throughout my entire educational experience at UConn. A variety of experiences make us more versatile. The skills that I gained through my SSS experience have made me a more resourceful student and will enrich my professional life.

MY EXPERIENCE IN THE SSS WATERBURY SUMMER PROGRAM

By: Jennifer Caraballo



I am a graduating senior at the University of Connecticut at the Waterbury campus majoring in Human Development and Family Studies with a minor in Psychology. When I first received the

acceptance letter from the University of Connecticut, I learned that I had to attend a six-week Pre-Collegiate Program prior to entering the fall semester. The thought of attending a six-week summer program right after high school did not appeal to me at this point in my life. For that reason, I considered attending another university. I do not regret my decision to attend the University of Connecticut because I know I made the correct choice. I was warmly welcomed and guided by the SSS staff. Under the advisement and supervision of the SSS program coordinator, Mrs. Lillie Wright, I have gained leadership skills and academic success. Because of this program, I am working with Mrs. Wright along with wonderful students as a peer mentor. This program motivated me to learn and to eagerly seek many great opportunities. During my freshman year, I was given the

opportunity to take a First Year Experience (FYE) course, which prepared me to serve as a peer mentor. Not only did I learn skills that enhanced my academic performance, I also learned transferable skills that can be applied towards my professional career. It is because of this course that I am now able to give back to the UConn community as a peer mentor.

The SSS Program is an excellent transitional program. I will forever be grateful for my experiences here. My smooth transition from high school to college exceeded my expectations and I highly recommend this program. Now, as a graduating senior, I will continue to practice these skills that will certainly assist me in my future profession.

STUDENT'S REFLECTION ON LIFE LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH SSS

By Shilpa Katkar



I can honestly say that if I had not participated in the SSS program, before

starting my freshman year at UConn, I know that my college experience would not have been the same. The program taught me how to manage all aspects of my college career by covering so many important topics such as choosing the right major, career advice, time and stress management workshops, volunteering, and the list goes on. The highlight for me was volunteering through the Smaller Learning Communities as a mentor to high school students. Before participating in SSS, I would have been too apprehensive and less likely to feel comfortable speaking to a group of

high school freshmen. Thanks to Mrs. Lille Wright, who encouraged me to volunteer, my self confidence increased and I learned more than I had anticipated. My success in my jobs through SSS as a Mentor/Tutor/Office Assistant, as an RA and Mentor in the UConn Upward Bound/ConnCAP program, and confidence to study abroad in London and India can be traced back to what I learned in the program. Now, as a graduating senior, I look back and I am grateful for the knowledge that I acquired through SSS and will use it after college in my future career.

CONGRATULATIONS SSS GRADUATES!



Kafayatou Afolabi
Moyo Enyi Amadi
Jeffrey Ambrose
Stacey Anglade
Rodolfo Antido Jr.
Rodney Baptiste
Raina Barber
Daniel Bedoya
Rushikumar Bhatt
Lawrence Bowden
Jessica Brown
Valerie Brown
Rachel Bryant
Mirza Bucuk
Anthony Byers
Melanie Canales
Maria Castaneda
Christy Laiying Chan
Lina Laina Chan
Maria Chaudry
Cara Chen

Heng Xin Chen
Rong Chen
Wen Sui Chen
William Chung
Giselle Colon
Luis E. Colon
Elena Beatriz Conde
Juan Correa
Jorge Cruz
Marilyn Davila
Lukentz Makenzy Deroly
Fedlyne Desrosiers
Aneidith DeJesus Diaz
Karissa Diaz
Oscar Munoz-Diaz
Erin Eccleston
Catherine Evans
Francisco T. Fadul
Christopher Farmer
Zaimis Omar Fernandez
Dana Fowler
Louis Gentile
Ahmad Ghafoor
Alessandra Giuliano
Nicole Glownia
Marta Gola
Eileen Gonzalez
Jasmine Gonzalez
Kristina Marie Gonzalez
Yesenia Grados
Ruchi Gupta

Sade Heard
Lucy Hernandez
Zohaib Ikram
Stephanie Jacobs
Patricia Jacome
Arlene Jaquez
Javil John
Ashley Ann Jones
Carlton Jones
Daphney Joseph
Armin Kamali
John Michael Kolodziej
Beverly Lamour
Anne Rose Leblanc
Jessica Sarah Leclair
Medjine Lesperance
Shaun Levy
Mikhail Liachenko
Shanti Lipscomb
Nioka Nicole Malcolm
Majella Dierdre Mark
Melissa Martinez
Ruby Mensah
Ikee McCloud
Parul Janakkumar Modi
Monica Mora
Mabedia Moreno
Nefta Mulugata
Admir Music
Curtis Nesmith Jr
Catherine Nguyen

Huy Nguyen
Yuen Nguyen
Yen Nguyen
Candice Latrice Nichols
Colin Palache
Mariangel Palacios
Karen Patel
Arnaldo Perez, Jr.
Martha Perez
Martina Persaud
Tan Pham
Robert Mark Phung
Lourdine Pierre
Alecia Powell
Latiesha Purifoy
Latiesha Quintanilla
Rossana Quiterio
Amarillis Ramos
Fareed Rasheed
Nadia Redway
James Rico
Zulma Rios
Janene Ritchens
Fernando Rivera Jr.
Ariel Sean Robinson
Andres Sebastian Romero
Sa'mone Russell
Jessica Santiago
Marzena Sasiela Sasiela
Demys Yamari Serrano
Romil Shah



Paulo Silva
Chantell Smith
Chardee Sneed
Michael Spinella
Natalia Tabakin
Christina Tao
Jeffrey N. Taylor
Sakkuna Thim
Christina Tiftikidis
Hoang To
Keyla Torres
Ruth Valentin
Jessica Walker
Dane Walton
Camille Wright
Magdalena Wroblewska
Vinh Xuan Vuong
Eugene Yeboah

**This list contains students who graduated between August 2007 - May 2008

GLOBAL CITIZENS

The Student Support Services program (SSS) encourages its students to study abroad during their undergraduate careers. Many SSS students are initially reluctant to study abroad for various reasons including financial insecurity and a lack of information. In 2001, the SSS program created its own study abroad opportunity tailored for SSS students. This three-week

Study Abroad Program at the University of Liverpool grants UConn college credit to participants. Now, after seven successful Liverpool programs, many more SSS students are beginning to see the value in studying abroad. Some students even choose to extend their time in Liverpool to include a summer internship. SSS staff members are pleased to see the significant

increase in the number of students participating in traditional study abroad programs. This past summer, Lesley Gumbs studied in Denmark and Yolette Florian studied in the Dominican Republic; both are traditional study abroad opportunities. In the fall 2008 semester, eight SSS students are participating in programs in

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various countries including Singapore, France, Spain, and South Africa.

Nursing in South Africa

This upcoming fall semester two students, Iris Lopez and Carolyn Maldonado, are attending the Cape Town, South Africa study abroad program. They are part of the first group of Nursing students to travel there to complete their clinical rotation. While in Cape Town, the School of Nursing students will also complete studies in African history, culture and politics. Below is a statement from one of the participants.

Carolyn Maldonado, Nursing

For the fall semester of 2008, I, along with fourteen of my peers will embark on a "Learning Adventure" of a lifetime. Along with our clinical instructor, Lisa-Marie Griffiths, and associate professor, Arthur Engler, we will complete our pediatric and maternity clinical rotation overseas. The clinical sites we will visit include Mowbray Maternity Hospital and Red Cross Children's Hospital. Additionally, we will work with a midwife to provide services to various communities within the Cape Town area.

Black Roots Study in Liverpool

The summer 2008 SSS trip is an opportunity for students to study the "Black Roots of Liverpool," that is, Liverpool's central and critical role in the African slave trade. The morning lectures were "fleshed out" in the afternoons as students went

out into the neighborhoods, community centers, schools, and cultural sites to meet with community leaders, activists, and educators to learn about and wrestle with the contemporary issues facing Liverpool's citizens today. Living near the University of Liverpool and City Center, students soon felt at home in Liverpool. In addition to traveling throughout Liverpool, this program included additional educational travel opportunities to London, Snowden, and Wales in the United Kingdom and to Berlin, Germany. Below are some of this year's attendees' reflections on the experience.

Eunice Omega, Journalism and English

It was an enlightening experience to learn a country's history apart from my own. It was thrilling to experience the culture outside of the classroom. Walking through the streets of Liverpool, I couldn't believe I was observing people that were similar to me yet so different.

Ashley Combs, Communication Sciences

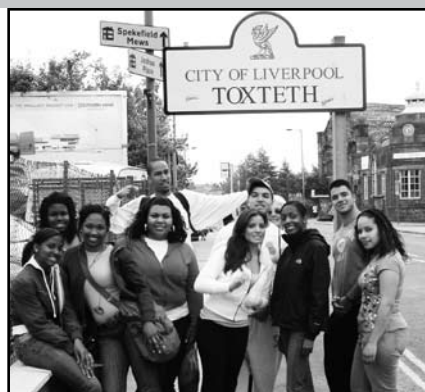
Studying abroad in Liverpool with the Student Support Services program was truly one of the most awesome experiences of my life. Not only was I given the opportunity to travel to various countries and experience other cultures, but I was also given the opportunity to learn first hand about the struggles that Black people face worldwide.

Mingfee Chowyen, English

The best part was seeing how Liverpool and America affected one another and how their histories intertwined. All that was taught on the tour made me want to learn more and more about Liverpool, America, and other countries.

Adonis Chamble, Communication Sciences

The knowledge I acquired from the Black Roots class has made me a stronger person because it taught me about my people and the struggles they have faced and continue to face today. The tour of Toxteth showed me the differences in the struggles blacks face in America in comparison to blacks in the United Kingdom.



After seeing Toxteth, (an impoverished area of Liverpool where many minorities live) I feel fortunate to have grown up in America. Overall, the Black Roots Study Tour was a very effective way to actively engage students and make them want to learn about significant events of the past.

Internship in Liverpool

Due to the continued success of the Liverpool study abroad program, many of our students felt so at home in Liverpool that they began applying for summer internships there. Over the last several years a few SSS students have been selected each year to take part in the summer internship. The students have worked in a variety of capacities both in offices and in the classroom. Last year's intern reflects on her experiences below.

Danique Williams, History

I interned in Liverpool, England this summer and it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I spent three months in England. My experiences transformed me into someone who is more confident and passionate about teaching. As an intern, I reached out to primary school students to get them excited about learning and I participated in university level research. During my time there, I taught the children about the African Diaspora from a different perspective. This experience was wonderful and I recommend that others take advantage of this opportunity. I really had a lot of fun and it was a pleasure to witness how much the students enjoyed interacting with us. I gained a lot of knowledge, which I hope to use in the future. This experience has really changed me into a more respectable and mature young lady. Thank you to everyone who sponsored my trip to England.



GEAR UP STUDENTS HEADED FOR COMPETITIVE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Samaria Powell and Aharon Walker, two juniors from the GEAR UP program, participated in the 6th Annual National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) Booz Allen Hamilton Youth Leadership Summit held in Washington, D.C. from July 19-23. This year, Senator Hillary Clinton and Nick Cannon were the keynote speakers. Nick began performing at eight years of age; he has performed in "Drum Line" and is the executive producer of 'Wild' n Out." Samaria and Aharon attend New Haven Academy and have been active within the GEAR UP program since they were in 6th grade. Selected students attended the professional conference, learned how to empower their peers, and learned how to

advocate for their schools and communities. Youth leaders, known as GEAR UP Scholars, worked together to compile a summit report which focused on key factors that educators should consider as they design strategies and programs for increasing student achievement.

Each year, students are selected in a competitive application process based on their academic achievements, leadership experiences, essays, and letters of recommendation. The UConn GEAR UP program is very pleased with the selection process results. It is rare that two students from the same program are chosen, given the number of students who apply for the conference. Dr. Reginald Mayo, Superintendent of New Haven Public



Schools (NHPS) was also very pleased to see that Samaria and Aharon were the recipients of this prestigious honor. He said, "this is the first time students from NHPS have been selected in what is an extremely competitive process – only 30 students across the nation were invited to participate in the summit, we are grateful to the UConn GEAR UP program for preparing the students to compete for this experience."

SSS ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS, SSS PEER ADVISOR OF THE YEAR AWARD AND SSS FACULTY AND STAFF AWARD – SEPTEMBER 2007

Each year, SSS hosts an SSS Award Ceremony which recognizes all SSS students who have achieved a 3.0 GPA in the past year, honors the Peer Advisor of the Year, and also is an opportunity to present the SSS Faculty and Staff Award.

Kwaku Ayebi-Awuah, SSS scholar, student service provider and educator, was awarded the first SSS Peer Advisor of the Year Award in 2007.

Kwaku served as an SSS Peer Advisor from his sophomore through senior years at the University of Connecticut assisting first year students as they face the challenges of college life on the Storrs campus. Kwaku was a highly effective paraprofessional and worked with the SSS Counseling staff in their efforts to provide support and the academic tools that are essential for success. He also served as an SSS Resident Advisor for two consecutive summer pre-collegiate programs. As Kwaku progressed in his academic program in Health Care Management, he broadened his scope by traveling overseas to research cross-cultural treatments for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). He conducted patient interviews in the United States, United Kingdom, and Ghana and reported on his research upon his return. During

Kwaku's final semester, he designed and hosted a symposium to raise the awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The symposium raised funds for Windham AIDS Program in Willimantic. In recognition of his many contributions to Student Support Services and the University of Connecticut, Kwaku Ayebi-Awuah was named SSS Peer Advisor of the Year.

Kwaku is now employed as a Research Assistant at Yale University's Department of Epidemiology and Public Health.

This past year, the SSS Faculty and Staff Award went to UConn Professor Michael Bradford. Professor Bradford was selected not only because he is an award winning director and associate professor of dramatic arts at the University of Connecticut, but also because he has been a tireless supporter of the SSS program and its students. His dedication has been demonstrated through his teaching as well as his willingness to provide inspirational lectures to both the Storrs and regional campus SSS students. His passion for literature and drama combined with a wonderful sense of humor has opened new doors for many students just entering UConn. He went out of his way to ensure that our students feel comfortable approaching him for help. To provide the support students needed to develop their

skills, Professor Bradford has tirelessly devoted office hours and meeting time. Indeed, he has spent so much time working individually with students that many SSS students credit him with having *taught* them how to write.

Michael Bradford is not only a gifted educator and advocate for students but he is also considered one of today's most promising African-American playwrights. His work has been produced Off-Broadway at the American Place Theatre, and elsewhere in New York at the Lark Developmental Theater, The Flea, The Access and the NADA theatre. Regionally, he has been produced at the Lorna Littleway Theatre, Louisville, KY and ETA Creative Theatre, Chicago, IL. He has received the Manhattan Theatre Club Playwright fellowship, the LARK theatre Writers Residency and the New York Stage and film residency, New York. His plays have received readings and workshops at the Manhattan Theatre Club, LARK Theatre, Ensemble Studio theatre, the Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre and the Actors Theatre of Louisville. His play, Living in the Wind, received over ten AUDELCO theatre award nominations, and Willy's Cut and Shine was recently published by Broadway Play publishing and produced at the ETA Creative Theatre, Chicago, IL.

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Center for Academic Programs Mission Statement

The Center for Academic Programs (CAP) increases access to higher education for high potential students who come from underrepresented ethnic or economic backgrounds and/or are first generation college students. CAP prepares students for successful entry into, retention in and graduation from a post-secondary institution through its four constituent programs. *Educational Talent Search, GEAR UP, and Upward Bound/ConnCAP* provide programming to increase middle and high school students' college access and retention; *Student Support Services* provides programming to facilitate students' retention in and graduation from the University of Connecticut. CAP designs and implements these programs in accordance with guidelines set forth by its funding bodies, including the University, the State of Connecticut and the U.S. Department of Education and other programs which promote educational opportunity for all.