## Mission:

The mission of the Student Support Services program at The University of Memphis is to increase retention and graduation of students who are either low-income, first-generation, and/or students who have a documented disability. The mission includes fostering an institutional climate supportive of the success of a diverse group of students who have an academic need by providing educational opportunities, giving attention to individual needs, and emphasizing academic excellence.

### 1. Major departments/functions/offices/responsibilities - brief listing:

Student Support Services provides comprehensive resources, services and support to eligible students including but not limited to:
Counseling - Counselors meet bi-weekly with SSS students to offer academic, personal, and career support.
Tutoring - Peer tutors provide individualized academic assistance.
Mentoring - Participants are matched with university/community leaders to foster meaningful relationships.
Financial Assistance - Students are assisted in securing the most appropriate financial resources available.
SSS Workshops - SSS offers a variety of workshops to enhance participants’ academic and personal development.
Cultural Activities - SSS offers free cultural activities to bring students, family, staff, and the academic community together informally.

2. **Up to 3 student learning objectives and outcomes for 06-07:**

**Student Learning Objective #1**

SSS Students will explore and develop personal management areas essential to leadership (such as goal setting, time management, public speaking, problem solving, and collaboration).

**Outcome #1 (with supporting data)**

Workshops were presented on the following topics relative to Learning Objective: Don't Get Mad, Get Glad; Be Assertive and Change Your Life; Time Management and Success; Setting Goals: Failing to Plan Means Planning to Fail; Campus Connections: Getting Involved in the U of M and Local Communities. One hundred percent of attendees to each of the aforementioned sessions agreed that the information was beneficial to their growth and development.

Information was presented to the SSS Student Advisory Board regarding properly conducting meetings. As a result of the discussion and printed information presented, leadership positions within the board were established and the duties and responsibilities of each position were discussed. Robert's Rules of Order were taught by SSS Director and Advisory Board Counselor. From observation of the meetings that transpired after the lessons and discussion, they were orderly, time-effective, and goal-oriented. All members of the Board sited their willingness to attend the meetings more after the lessons because they felt goals were accomplished and that they were really contributing to the goals of the SSS department.

As reported on Student Individual Success Plans, ninety percent of all SSS participants at The University of Memphis are engaged in the university community via participation in campus organizations, research with faculty, projects with university administrators, mentorship with faculty/staff/student leaders/community leaders, and/or university sponsored community outreach. Of those involved, many hold leadership roles within their organizations. To name a few: (Creston Thomas - President of National Society of Black Engineers; Ashley Sanchez - Senator at Large in Student Government Association; Ross Tucker - Community Chair for Service on Saturday; April Jones - Vice President of Alpha Lambda Delta; Kayla Harris - Student Activities Council - Cultural Arts Chair; Candace Nora Tullis - Resident Advisor; Shirmilia Burns - Student Disability Service - Student Advisory Board)
**Student Learning Objective #2**

Seventy-five percent of SSS students will have the minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0, the standard academic performance level to remain in good academic standing.

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**Outcome #2 (with supporting data)**

SSS launched the Early Alert Program in fall 2006. Prior to semester mid-terms, staff sent progress report forms to professors requesting evaluations of participants’ academic performances. Staff then identified students in danger of failure. Participants and staff reviewed early alert results, and discussed options for the remainder of the semester, such as tutoring, adjusting work loads, or course withdrawal.

All students that failed a course the previous semester, had outstanding remedial and developmental coursework, or was on academic probation were required to attend tutoring, as prescribed on their individual success plans.

Ninety-eight percent of all 2006-2007 SSS participants obtained cumulative grade point averages of 2.0 or better, hence maintaining requirements for academic good standing.

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**Student Learning Objective #3**

SSS Students will build interpersonal relationships through interactions with peers and SSS Staff.

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**Outcome #3 (with supporting data)**

Through a batch report of the Noel-Levitz CSI, it was ascertained that 60 percent (96) of SSS Students self-identified a need for social enhancement. This grouping came from questions related to needing new friends, interest in student government, interest in learning about clubs and social organizations, and mentor relationships.

Additionally, students were asked during their initial interviews what they planned to gain from participation in SSS and a recurring theme among others was the ability to meet new people and generate friends.

On the SSS Program Evaluation Form, 100 percent of students polled reported that they were "very satisfied or satisfied" with their opportunities to interact with other SSS Students socially.

On a question that required open ended comments about what students see as the strengths of Student support Services, the following are a few of the comments that support achievement of the goal of building relationships:
"The ability to meet new people and get help while doing so."

"The advisors and relationship with peers..."

"Tutoring and socialization within SSS..."

"The knowledge and helpfulness of the counselors. The support of the fellow students/peers.."

"Strong community-based students and staff..

### 3. 3 main departmental goals and related accomplishments/results for 06-07:

#### Goal #1

SSS Staff will build a supportive, welcoming SSS environment with a sense of community and cohesion among SSS staff and participants.

#### Results/Accomplishments #1A

Piloted the "Girl Talk" series, which allowed SSS female participants to talk about issues that impact them in an open, comfortable environment. Dialogue included dating issues, domestic violence, child molestation, and much more.

Continued to develop communal events and traditions that foster a sense of belonging among SSS participants, such as Family, Food, and Fun Nights and Stress Free Zone.

Increased the number of SSS students participating in cultural activities by 100 percent and the number of workshop attendees by 38 percent, supporting the achievement of the goal of a sense of community and cohesion among SSS staff and participants.

#### Results/Accomplishments #1B

In spring 2007, Student Support Services developed a special section of the ACAD 1100 "Introduction to the University" course. The course was available only to SSS participants with an SSS counselor as the instructor and curriculum specifically designed to meet the needs of SSS participants. This model worked well because it increased the number of contact time that SSS had with the participants in the class and it enhanced the comfort level and openness that those students had with the SSS office.

#### Goal #2

Student Support Services will open the SSS Technology Classroom which will offer a quiet and interactive environment for SSS participants to access and learn information
technology skills in a safe and nurturing environment, promoting proficiency and confidence. The SSS Technology Classroom will be equipped with fourteen computer stations and an instructor station. Individual and group tutoring focusing on how to navigate through software applications will be offered.

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<tr>
<th>Results/Accomplishments #2A</th>
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<td>The long-awaited SSS Technology Classroom in Mitchell 409 opened for business on March 29, 2007. Policies and procedures for use of the technology classroom were developed by using the TigerLan policies as a model. The technology graduate assistant and technology tutor served as lab assistants, during lab hours, assisting students with individual technology needs. Students enjoyed heavy use of this space during the last month of the semester, for research, word-processing, and study purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Results/Accomplishments #2B</th>
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<td>During the three weeks of full operation during spring 2007, 108 individual login times were charted. This degree of use during the last month of the semester is a strong predictor of the need for this facility and the anticipated usage in future years.</td>
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<th>Goal #3</th>
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<td>Increase understanding, appreciation, and participation in service learning among SSS participants.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Results/Accomplishments #3A</th>
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<td>A workshop was conducted that discussed campus and community involvement and availed students of the community efforts that many students participate in. SSS Students participated in two community-based volunteer efforts during 2006-2007 academic years.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Results/Accomplishments #3B</th>
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<td>Through a focus group of SSS students that participated in both community service projects, the goals of increasing understanding, appreciation, and participation in service learning among SSS participants was accomplished. Many of the students cited a desire to continue community service on their own and even after graduation. The Student Advisory Board committed to sponsoring a major community service project each semester as a part of their board duties.</td>
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4. **Individual staff and student accomplishments:**

SSS Student Advisory Board hosted their first student-facilitated workshop "for students, by students." The workshop was entitled "A Day in My Shoes" and dealt with issues of diversity, including but not limited to race, religion, background, sexual orientation, lifestyle choices, etc. SSS Participants were allowed to openly discuss issues that affect them without fear of condemnation and judgement.

During 2006-07 academic years, at least ten SSS Students have or are currently participating in career internships in their academic fields.

5. **3 main bragging points for department – What top administrators should know about your area:**

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<tr>
<th>Bragging point #1</th>
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<td>Of the 160 SSS active participants in fall 2005 of the SSS project, 131 (81.87%) enrolled in coursework and/or graduated in 2006-2007 academic year, indicative of persistence to completion.</td>
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<th>Bragging point #2</th>
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<td>Since our inception in 2005, 20 students have graduated. Of those 20, 12 of 20 (60%) graduated in six years or less, which is significantly higher than the institutional rate. Furthermore, 10 of 20 (50%) completed with 3.0 or better. Nineteen of 20 (95%) completed with cumulative GPA's of 2.5 or better.</td>
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<th>Bragging point #3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not only are SSS students being retained, but they are also competing at the highest level. Ninety-eight percent of all 2006-2007 SSS participants obtained cumulative grade point averages of 2.0 or better, hence maintaining requirements for academic good standing.</td>
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6. **Revenue Producing Initiatives and Results:**

N/A

7. **Community Involvement and Partnerships:**

SSS Students collected canned food items in fall 2006 to donate to the MIFA Food Bank. This event was planned and executed by the SSS Student Advisory Board.

SSS Students participated in a service learning activity in spring 2007 by volunteering at Orange Mound Community Center, presenting valuable information to school-age
children. (See Event section below for more details.)

One of the ways Student Support Services was able to assist in alleviating some of the financial burden associated with a college education for SSS participants is through the generosity of the Schadt Foundation, Inc. in providing funding for the TRIO Book Fund. This highly competitive scholarship awarded five deserving SSS students book scholarships at the rate of $1,000/student.

### 8. Collaborative Efforts:

In support of institutional commitment for the SSS grant, the following departments formed interdisciplinary teams with Student Support Services to present workshops and/or trainings to SSS participants: Career and Employment Services, University Libraries, Psychological Counseling Unit, Career Counseling Center, Educational Support Programs, Center for Economic Education, Office of Student Financial Aid, Advanced Learning Center, and Public Safety.

### 9. If applicable, 3 major 06-07 events/programs/etc. with description, attendance info, money raised:

**Event #1**

Thirty-five students and staff members from the University of Memphis Student Support Services project participated in a youth community outreach program Saturday, Feb. 24, 2007 as a way to show appreciation to the community for its support of the nation's TRIO programs. Participants from the SSS project volunteered at the Orange Mound Community Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Students presented 20-minute workshops to students ages 10 to 16 around the theme “Caring for the Mind, Body, and Soul.” Topics included good study habits, personal hygiene, and healthy living. The event concluded with a panel discussion about college life.

**Event #2**

The Student Support Services Banquet was held on April 18, 2007. The purpose of the banquet was to celebrate the accomplishments of the SSS program and its participants and to recognize other individuals and departments instrumental in the successful implementation of the SSS program. The theme of the banquet was "A Change is Going to Come" reflective of the positive change that a higher education can make in the lives of first-generation college students. Recipients of SSS scholarships were also announced awarding over $90,000 in financial assistance to students. One-hundred and four students, family members, and University personnel attended.

**Event #3**

As an end-of-year activity, Student Support Services hosted "SSS Day at the Ballpark." On April 6, 2007, 25 SSS Students and Staff attended the opening game of
the Memphis Redbirds season and dined at BB King’s Restaurant on Historic Beale Street. The program and students were highlighted on the scoreboard during the Redbirds Game. This was a wonderful opportunity for many out-of-state students to experience Downtown Memphis and for local students who had never attended a Redbirds game to also have the experience.

10. **Detailed contact summaries for the 06-07 year as applicable - headcount counseling sessions, cases, programs help, students housed, children housed, children cared for, tests administered, interviews hosted, etc.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Counseling Sessions</td>
<td>1,432</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop Attendees</td>
<td>393</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Activity Attendees</td>
<td>336</td>
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11. **3 Main initiatives for 07-08**

**Initiative #1**

Student Support Services will restructure the mentoring program to be reflective of current student needs, as identified on the Annual Evaluation. As a result of the evaluation, SSS will pair 44 students that self-identified an interest in having a professional mentor with community partners to build networking opportunities and give students an opportunity for experiential learning by seeing first-hand the daily activities of individuals employed in their chosen career fields and thus enabling students to make links between academic preparation and the world of work.

**Initiative #2**

As Student Support Services enters its third year of existence at The University of Memphis, many SSS students are nearing graduation stage. In the coming year, a major emphasis will be placed on graduate and professional schools. Efforts will include inviting speakers to discuss preparation for graduate and professional school entrance exams, such as GRE, GMAT, and LSAT. Additionally, a small number of representatives from local graduate programs will be invited to discuss admissions requirements, deadlines, and academic programs to participants.

**Initiative #3**

In 2007-08, Student Support Services will launch the "Foods of the World" series. As first-generation and low-income college students, many of our students rarely experience foods outside of the traditional American and Southern fares. In the coming academic year, each month the SSS program will host cultural outings to local restaurants. Japanese, Mexican, Italian, and Indian based restaurants have been
identified. Lessons regarding the culture of the countries highlighted will also
accompany the restaurant outings. This goal of this initiative is to give students a
well-rounding and to diversify their college experience, hopefully leading to a lifelong
impact.

12. **How did feedback you received from your planning meetings or annual report submission assist your department in moving forward with goals and learning objectives?**

Not only the feedback but also the requirement of participating in planning meetings
and submitting annual reports ensures that the SSS department is strategic in our
programming and offerings. These exercises and the feedback keep us in a continual
cycle of growth and change. We planned and executed our plans (planning meeting).
We then evaluated our students to see if the expected outcomes of our planning were
achieved and to reassess our students needs (surveys, focus groups, student advisory
board feedback, etc.). We then reported that data (annual report). And then went
back to the drawing board with planning for the upcoming year based upon those
factors of feedback received from planning meeting and annual reports and student
needs. This process has been immensely important in our efforts to make The
University of Memphis' Student Support Services project a model program among our
peers. With this model, our programming is planned and purposeful with intent of
meeting student needs and enhancing student learning.

13. **In planning for 07-08, what intentional data can you collect to produce and analyze retention data and results?**

In evaluating the Student Support Services (SSS) program at the University of
Memphis (U of M), it is important that participants experience notable and quantifiable
changes in their academic performance, retention rate, and graduation rate. In order
to examine this, approximately 100 students who qualified for the SSS program and
made application to the program, but did not participate, will be tracked along with all 160 program participants with both groups compared to the general student body
in order to quantify the difference that SSS makes for eligible participants.