Morgan Pusek was selected by the Committee on the Status of Women as the student recipient of the prestigious Mary Lucretia and Sarah Emily Creighton Award. Morgan served as a role model of accomplishment for women.

Bianca Baker recently passed her State Boards Exam and is now a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

Quamesha Hayes was selected for an internship with Omaha Public Schools! She would like to thank Tami for bringing the opportunity to her attention and also being a great help in her development as a student and leader.

Xavier Glover was nominated for Alpha Sigma Nu! Xavier will be inducted next semester. Congratulations!

Beaux Beauvais and Veronica Faber competed in the Creighton University EMS competition on November 16th. Beaux’s team placed third and Veronica’s team placed fifth.

Martín Estrada was accepted into the George Washington University Law School, DePaul Law, Tulane Law, and St. Thomas Law! Martín has a big choice to make! In addition, Martín’s Sociological research won 1st place at the Nebraska Undergraduate Sociological Symposium.

Yashswee KC was accepted into the Creighton University Medical School. She will be joining the class of 2018!

Daisy Liberato was admitted into the Creighton Dental School. Daisy will be starting next fall. Way to go!

Itoya Lynn McConnell is serving as the Historian for the Creighton African Student Association!

Jason Nguyen Won 1st place for a recent marketing project. Congratulations, Jason!

Lulu Alvarez was voted onto the Creighton Student Union (CSU) Arts and Sciences Board of Representatives! Lulu is also serving on the Student Life Committee. Way to represent!

Clarie Liang was voted onto the Creighton Student Union (CSU) Arts and Sciences Board of Representatives!
Vanessa Marie John prefers students to call her “Vanessa,” not “John,” even though there is another faculty member in SSS with the same first name. Vanessa was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico but considers her hometown to be Gallup.

She has worked at Creighton for nearly a year and enjoys interacting with students and getting to know different support systems that are offered at the university. She really enjoys working as the Coordinator for the Native American Advancement program, as it allows her to advise and guide students. Her greatest achievement so far was having the opportunity to work for SSS, and we are happy to have her here! Vanessa says it delights her to see how students show their passion through their involvement in SSS, as she has witnessed during workshops and seeing students study in the facilities.

An interesting fact about Vanessa is that she is the legal guardian of her little brother, who is currently a senior in high school. In her free time she enjoys watching performing arts shows and trying to find a hobby that would interest her for the long term. Vanessa is pretty crafty, which she proved when she single-handedly made all the props for a children’s play.

Vanessa is an exciting person who enjoys adventures such as travelling to Costa Rica and zip lining. If she had the opportunity to have a time machine she would fast forward in time to go to Greece because “it’s a beautiful and serene place to be.” She is also a very selfless person because if she were to win the lottery, her money would be spent on securing her brother and grandfather financially. She would also give back to the community by starting a small scholarship fund.

The superhero she most wants to be is Batman, because he is mysterious. The movie of Vanessa’s life would be a comedy starring Rachel Bilson.
**Student Support Service Wish List**

Cedora Barnett: “Someone to license my car”

Florie Phan: “An iPad”

Paul Nguyen: “To visit my sister in Arizona”

Karen Thurber: “For everyone to graduate”

Martín Estrada: “Miley Cyrus tickets”

Itoya McConnell: “Anything Tweety Bird. Or money.”

Vanessa John: “A scarf. But, a cool one!”

Abby Bigaouette: “A pair of Heelies (size 7 ½)”

Amber Franco: “Cheaper tuition”

Rich Jehlik: “What more could I want than a beautiful view of the river? And I have that!”

Jenna Aiwohi: “Jackets and shoes”

Tami Buffalohead-McGill: “For the Ray Bucko Endowed Scholarship to reach $30,000”

Yoselin Deleon: “A pair of Uggs”

Drew Dillon: “The newsletters to get done”

Vanessa Rodriguez: “Chicken”
Spotlight on Rachel Baiyee-Cady
By Bianca Baker

Rachel Baiyee-Cady is a sophomore Biology/Pre-med major, from Denver, Colorado. Rachel decided to come to Creighton University because of the close knit, Jesuit community. She joined SSS because she worked here in the fall of her freshman year as a work-study student, and quickly realized the benefits available to SSS students. After learning about how much SSS helps students, and through the encouragement of Tami, Rachel applied. One of Rachel’s favorite parts of the SSS program is that the staff usually has candy. As she explains, “It’s nice to have a little treat and a pick-me-up after a stressful week of classes, studying, and exams.” Academically, Rachel has most benefitted from SSS with the help of Rich for her Chemistry classes.

In addition to her SSS involvement, Rachel was involved with the collaboration with others to plan the diversity retreat in the spring of 2013. Her greatest accomplishment thus far has been hiking five mountains, and she has a goal of backpacking across Europe sometime during her lifetime (we sure hope she sends back some souvenirs). Rachel’s plans for the future are to go to medical school and become a physician, particularly a pediatrician due to her love for children. The most interesting thing that has happened to her at CU was when she saw a bat in Creighton Hall flying around. As amusing as the bat was for Rachel, the most fun she ever had was when she went to Chicago over fall break because it was her first time there and she had fun exploring and adventuring her way through the new city. If she won the lottery, her gracious and generous heart would give it to her family and to charity.

Rachel’s favorite quote is a message she likes to share with others: “Every saint has a past, every sinner has a future.”
Interview with Vanessa Rodriguez
By Clarie Liang

Vanessa Rodriguez has worked in the Student Support Services office for almost a year as the Coordinator of the Ignatian College Connection program. This program mainly works with high school students to prepare them for the college process, and to encourage them to apply to Creighton. First generation students benefit by having a Coordinator who has been in their shoes to help guide them, as well as learning study skills, time management, and getting help with their FAFSA.

Her favorite part about working at Creighton is working with students and getting to know them on a better level. During her junior year at Creighton, Vanessa joined SSS, and continued participation into her senior year. She knows that the SSS is a good support system to have and a great resource for students to utilize. Besides the help of academic assistance, she especially enjoys the cultural support SSS offers. According to Vanessa, “the SSS staff and students are great people and they are willing to help you with basically anything.”

The advice Vanessa would give to students at Creighton is, “listen and be open to change. A good amount of stubbornness can be beneficial, but if students are not open to adapting or changing for the better then they’re limiting themselves to only certain kinds of experiences.” Vanessa believes that intrinsic motivation, open mindedness, and adaptability are the factors that lead to life success.

One of Vanessa’s favorite pastimes is watching movies. If a movie was made about her life it would be called The Weird and Awkward and The Van that was Broken and Vanessa would be played by Aubrey Plaza. Her greatest achievement so far is graduating from college and becoming a “responsible” adult. If Vanessa had won the lottery during high school she would have used the money to build a replica of the chocolate river room from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. But now, she would buy a hammock, then a private island to put the hammock on, and then she would lie in the hammock.

Vanessa loves history, so the most interesting place she has ever been to is the Mayan Ruins in Honduras. If she was give access to a time machine, Vanessa would travel back to the most important time period she has learned in history. But she would have to be immortal and invisible. But before that she would want to travel back to when she was a little kid and relive the moments she had forgotten. Superpowers that Vanessa would like are mind reading and super ninja power. She wants to be able see the memories and pictures that formed a thought, to more accurately be in someone’s shoes. She would like to also have super ninja power because “it is cool and it’s a handy power to have.”
Cedora Barnett: Student Development Specialist? Or World-Class Super Spy?
By Drew Dillon

Cedora “That’s totally my real name” Barnett claims to have been born in Omaha, but that information has not currently been verified. What is known is that Ms. Barnett has worked in the SSS office for three full months performing “academic advising, student counseling, and pretty much everything Karen does.” As you see, she has already begun crafting a persona based on a known and loved public figure – but, whatever her motivations, “Cedora” has sage advice for the student population. “DO NOT PROCRASTINATE,” she said with practiced inflection. “IT’S VERY BAD.” Very bad, indeed.

Despite her guarded demeanor, I was able to unearth some information about the Sphinx of Student Services. While denying any sort of existence beyond the bounds of the office, “Cedora” admitted to being the mother of three kids (Ceaunna, Arianna, and Elijah), and to having aspirations of being “crafty” (which only confirmed my suspicions). When responding to my direct query as to what drew her to SSS, “Cedora” responded by saying, “It serves students in need, and that genuine concern and interest is extremely important and inspiring.” A likely story.

The conversation soon turned to escape, as “Cedora” mentioned that she has traveled through Belize and Honduras, but the Cayman Islands hold a special place in her heart. However, given even greater means of elusion – say, a time machine – “Cedora” would instead travel back to the Victorian Era because, “Everything was so pretty.” She casually mentioned that she was a History major when she attended Creighton, to back up her bold claim – although it may have been a red herring to throw me off her scent. On the topic of evasion, I have heard word that if she were to have any super power, it would be invisibility in order to, “be nosy in everyone’s business.” I rest my case.

My research has painted a very full picture. An entire story, really. In fact, it’s a motion picture epic – a black comedy called “Cedora,” starring Keisha Knight Pulliam. And it’s tagline? “Don’t sweat the small stuff.”

In short, Cedora appears to be an approachable, knowledgeable, and welcome addition to the SSS staff – and I, for one, will be keeping a close eye on her.
Spotlight on: Daniel Rodriguez
by Drew Dillon

Sophomore Exercise Science major Daniel Rodriguez is a man of action. Daniel, or Danny to his friends, goes to school, works, volunteers, and helps “run” the household with his mother, his sister, her husband, and three kids. With so many parts of his life needing attention, it’s no wonder he bought himself a motorcycle to get from place to place quickly (yet safely, we’re sure).

A native to Omaha, Danny chose Creighton due to its private school environment, which was similar to his Catholic High School. The Student Support Services program has helped Danny by providing, “free printing, a chill environment, and a kind and hospitable staff.” Danny also received the SEEDS (now the “Bucko”) scholarship, so we’re sure that’s been helpful, too.

Despite his other responsibilities, Danny strives to put his academic career as a top priority. He considers himself a “quick learner,” and has set a goal for himself to get only A’s and B’s in his classes for an entire year. One way to achieve this might be to take more classes with his favorite professors, Elizabeth Cooke and Jennifer Yee, who he says are, “interesting; they make it so I actually like learning.” Although Danny doesn’t know exactly what he wants to do with his education, he knows it will definitely be something “related to human anatomy or muscles.”

One way Danny likes to show his mastery of muscle is by wielding his very own machete, about which he would only say, “it cuts things easily.” Even though he knows how to use Danny Trejo’s favorite weapon, Danny Rodriguez’s best piece of advice is, “Don’t take your anger out on other people. Don’t stress, be happy – everything gets better in time.”
Andrew Charles Dillon, known as Drew, was born and raised in Ralston, Nebraska. Drew started in September as the Administrative Assistant of the SSS office, and he enjoys every bit of it. He describes the atmosphere at Creighton as very friendly and great because of the awesome and helpful people he gets to associate with everyday.

His job is fascinating because he gets to deal with office organization and collecting data for the government grants that pay for the whole SSS program (so everyone should stop by his office to say thank you!). But the most exciting job he does is moving papers on his desk from one side to another.

Drew enjoys the SSS program because of the community it creates (students supporting other students), all the opportunities it provides, and all the great food given. Aside from work, Drew enjoys writing. In fact, he just finished the manuscript of his first novel. He’s also traveled around to most of the continental United States, as well as Germany, Ireland, and England. While in Ireland he was able to go to the Cliffs of Moher (which is quite beautiful). His greatest achievement was convincing his wife to marry him.

Drew’s greatest tip for success is, “accept your own strengths and limitations, set goals, and surround yourself with people who help you achieve them.”

If Drew was given a time machine, he would use it to go back in time to “unravel a lot of mysteries, such as who killed JFK, if dinosaurs really ate cave men, and who Jack the Ripper was.” If Drew ever won the lottery, he would probably feel obligated to be responsible with it — paying off debts, and giving back to the community — but would then blow the rest of it on comics and a full suit of armor. He would like to be Hiro from the TV series “Heroes” because Hiro can stop time, which is the one thing no one can get more of. If his life was a movie, it would be an indie romantic comedy starring Gerard Butler.
Martín’s European Adventure
By Martín Estrada

Last year when I was debating to study abroad, I wasn’t sure where I wanted to go or if I even wanted to leave. An opportunity to study in Limerick, Ireland fell into my lap and I decided to take it. Little did I know, that this experience would be once in a lifetime, and would not only change my outlook in life, but how I live.

I studied Sociology at the University of Limerick. The highlights of my trip included St. Patrick’s Day in Dublin, performing with the Irish Chamber Orchestra, and traveling to over 8 European countries. While abroad I traveled to Paris, Amsterdam, Prague, Warsaw, Milan, Rome, Venice, and back to Amsterdam again because I loved it so much! I passed through England and German on multiple occasions, overwhelmed by the breathtaking scenery. Some highlights of my trips included: going to mass at Vatican City, visiting the Anne Frank house in Amsterdam, visiting the Coliseum in Rome, shopping at the Ferrari store with Adiel Yanez, and having a candlelight dinner overlooking the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

The culture was very different from what I’m used to: such as the foods, language, and ways people interacted. Ireland still had all the comforts of home, such as Pizza Hut and T.J.Maxx (Although they called it TKMaxx). And the people were so friendly—I could walk into a pub and know absolutely no one, and walk out knowing the whole pub. I enjoyed learning about the Irish people’s lives and backgrounds, along with stories of the customs and history of Ireland.

Although I enjoyed traveling all over Europe, Ireland was my favorite country. It was somewhere I can see myself living in the future. It’s green everywhere all the time, the weather never gets below 40° and despite the constant rain, I always wanted to be outside. Each morning I would wake up and run along the Shannon River, passing two abandoned castles and cottages where old men would sit and fish and always wave. Then I would head to class where I studied Irish society and culture. I made many friends with whom I still keep in touch. The teachers were awesome and the campus was absolutely beautiful. After class I often stopped by one of the five pubs on campus for a nice pint.

After over four months abroad, I had to finally return to the United States. Although I missed my friends and family dearly, I did not want to leave Ireland. I had made a life there and wanted to stay. Hopefully in the future I will return and visit such a beautiful country.

Learn More
For more information about Studying Abroad, visit the Office of International Programs’ website at:
www.creighton.edu/internationalprograms
Information sessions are held every Friday from 2:00 to 2:50 pm
Creighton is currently going through a number of large changes, and the Administrators are taking a look at each program to establish what is currently working, and what can be made to work more smoothly. In October, they asked for information about SSS students from the last decade – graduation rates and GPAs – any hard data they could use to establish a definition of success. So I pulled up files, and created giant piles of paper and information, and created an enormous spreadsheet with so many numbers I may have gone cross-eyed from effort. And the information that emerged was truly astounding.

The average GPA of a SSS student is currently over 3.0, which has been a steady increase since 2001, when 2.5 was the average. Related to this increase, the overall number of SSS students who earn a place on the Dean’s List has increased from only 19 in 2003 to almost 50 last spring. Also, the number of students with a GPA of 2.0 or lower has decreased from 20 to 9 in the same timeframe. These overall trends indicate not just that our program is beneficial, but that also our students are hard-working and dedicated to their own improvement.

"These overall trends indicate . . . our students are hard-working and dedicated to their own improvement."
SSS Impact: A Retrospective (Continued)
By Drew Dillon

The benefits of SSS don’t stop with higher GPAs – in the last fifteen years, graduation rates have also been on the rise. For students who entered the program in 1998, the overall graduation rate was 41% - less than half! But for SSS students beginning in 2006 (the latest data we have access to), the graduation rate skyrocketed to 97%.

If this trend continues, we expect a graduation rate for our latest group of students to be somewhere in the neighborhood of 173% - meaning not only our students will graduate, but also their siblings, children, neighbors, and pets.

All joking aside, the information we provided to the University is both extremely promising, and a difficult challenge. It is our goal as a program to continue these upward trends across the board, which means setting bigger goals and constantly redefining our view of success. We hope that the legacy of this program will also spur our students to do the same – to continue the history of excellence, and to make the most of the services we offer.

As Director of SSS, Tami Buffalohead-McGill was understandably thrilled with these findings. As she said, “Every year, the students of SSS continue to amaze me because of their intelligence, commitment, perseverance, and continued achievements. I expect this program to continue to grow in success because of their work ethic, and their willingness to do what needs to be done, and consistently surpass the obstacles set in front of them.”

Thank you all for your continued hard work. We do our best to make you look good—and on days like this, that’s the easiest job in the world.
Raymond Bucko S.J. Endowed Scholarship

The SSS Director worked with Mr. Jeremy Bouman in Development and Fr. Roc O’Connor S.J. to develop the Raymond Bucko S.J. Endowed Scholarship to supplement the $300,000 in university funds in order to improve enrollment and retention of SSS participants. Fr. Bucko was a champion of the SSS program and a friend and mentor to many of the students that participated in the program during his 14 years at Creighton. Fr. Bucko left Creighton earlier this year, and renaming the scholarship and setting up the endowment is a fitting honor to his Creighton legacy. This scholarship was formerly known as the Scholarship for Educationally and Economically Disadvantaged Students (SEEDS), and is awarded to high-achieving, low-income SSS participants to help reduce loans and fill financial gaps.

Economic diversity at Creighton is slowly declining due to rising tuition costs, declining federal and state aid, and other factors. These combined factors make it more difficult for low income students to enroll and stay at Creighton. While Creighton provides $300,000 in Raymond Bucko S.J. Scholarship funds, this amount has not increased in 12 years despite tuition increases. In 2001 Creighton tuition was $16,500 and in 2013 tuition was $32,812. If the Bucko scholarship were to keep pace with rising costs, an additional $150,000 is necessary to adjust for increased tuition - not including fees, room and board.

As seen in the graph below, in 2012-2013, of the SSS students served, 86% of them met low income guidelines, which means $300,000 in Bucko Scholarship does not go very far. Before the Reverend Raymond Bucko SJ Endowed Scholarship will begin to award scholarships, the endowment must first reach $30,000.

2012-2013 Eligibility Status

- Low income and first generation: 79%
- First generation only: 6%
- Low income only: 0.5%
- Disabled: 1.4%
- Disabled and low income: 0.5%
SSS is one of the five federally funded TRIO programs at Creighton University under the Department of Educational Opportunity Programs.

SSS is grant funded through the Department of Education to provide comprehensive services to help students achieve a successful college experience by increasing academic performance, retention, and graduation rates.

SSS also works to foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of economically disadvantaged students, first generation students, and students with disabilities.

The strength of the SSS program is providing comprehensive support to eligible students at Creighton University who have the ability and desire to succeed at Creighton University but would benefit from additional advocacy, academic, personal, financial, and career support. SSS is a resource that provides personalized and comprehensive support services for eligible participants to help them achieve their full potential.

Thank you to everyone for getting appointments and workshops completed last fall. If you didn’t sign the notebook, please stop by the front counter and sign in in the notebook.

In January, before coming back to school, please have W-2’s and 1040 forms ready to copy for the Financial Aid Office. Complete the FAFSA in January or in February. I can assist you with the completion of the FAFSA.

While you are at home, look over your schedule. You have until January 21st to change your schedule. If you have a good schedule, please do not change it. If you need more classes, please look at NEST each week and see if you can add a class. I will try to email you about grades and if spring classes need to be changed. Remember to do orientation meetings with me when you get back in January.

I hope you had a wonderful holiday. Be safe and careful in your travels.

After January 6, 2014 all the staff will be back in the office from winter break, so contact us if you have questions.