

# The Student Supporter



Student Support Services • 225 Osband Hall  
(205) 348-7087 • [www.ctl.ua.edu/sss](http://www.ctl.ua.edu/sss)

A unit of the Center for  
Teaching and Learning

November/December 2007

## In This Issue..

- Looking for a Role Model?
- Learning is Magnetic
- December Degree Candidates
- Are You Planning to Graduate in May 2008?
- GRE is Changing
- SSS Spring 2008 Classes
- Spring Tutoring Available
- New SSS Website Coming
- Vonquesha Winn-New Peer Mentor
- SSS Student Achievers

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

- November 6** – SAB Meeting
- November 20** – SAB Meeting
- November 21** – Classes dismissed
- November 22** – Thanksgiving holidays
- November 23** – Thanksgiving holidays
- November 30** – Last day for all tests
- December 4** – SAB meeting
- December 4** – Financial Aid Workshop
- December 5** – Financial Aid Workshop
- December 7** – Last day of classes
- December 7** – SSS tutoring ends
- December 10** – Week of final exams begins
- December 15** – Commencement

## LOOKING FOR A ROLE MODEL?—MEET ANGELA BENJAMIN!



*“A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the measure as I have received and am still receiving.”*

Albert Einstein

As the graduate student liaison to UA’s Coca Cola First Generation Scholars, all of whom are SSS participants, Angela Benjamin is the prototype for successful first-generation college students. Angela joined the University in the fall of 2007 as a graduate student in the School of Social Work where she is pursuing her MSW degree. Coming from Alabama State University, Angela was the 2007 Student of the Year, and graduated Summa Cum Laude in May 2007 with a 3.94 GPA. In addition to her academic pursuits, she is the president of the community-based resource group, the Coalition of Concerned Families (CCF), and president of the Office of Student Affairs of the National Association of Black Social Workers.

However, this is not where Angela’s story begins. To go to the beginning you have to go back to 1968 and travel to a poor neighborhood next to the railroad tracks in Selma, Alabama—a place and time full of inequality and adversity. So much so that Angela’s biological father was forced to flee to Detroit following a confrontation with some brutal, racist police officers in Selma. From this early experience Angela became acquainted with the consequences of society’s dysfunction. However, she also learned the power of faith, family and love at the same time. Shortly after her father left Alabama, Angela’s mother married the man she has been married to for the last 39 years and to this day Angela points to the support, encouragement and instruction that her mother and stepfather offered as the foundation for her achievements in life. As Angela puts it, “I was the “star child” of my family by early adolescence. I did not ask for this. They (my family) gave it to me. This came with heavy burdens and responsibilities. My parents were determined that I would be a survivor. And so I am. I will be the first to graduate in a very large family. It is my gift to them.”

In grade school Angela excelled. She became the class valedictorian, bringing her family pride and joy. Despite the fact that they lived in a small \$40 a month house that was infested with rats and attached to a church and that didn’t have a bathtub, Angela’s family always celebrated her accomplishments. Even with her scholastic success, Angela was still a child and the pressure to uphold the image of the perfect child became too much to bear. Angela recalls that as a young teenager she began to hang out at clubs and party and break all the rules she could think of. Before she turned 16 her first child was born and her hard life got a little bit harder. People began to call her a “good kid gone bad,” but her family never wavered. They stood steadfast in support of her and she graduated from high school in the top of her class.

By the time she was twenty, she was a single mother of three small children and was well acquainted with poverty. In addition to being parted from her birth father, she lost her older sister unexpectedly at an early age. In the face of these losses and an unsuccessful marriage, Angela never lost sight of some simple truths she learned from her family early on. “I know that God has taken the time to give each of us a part of Him—our own purpose, ‘one in this manner and another in that,’” Angela says. “I have a gift of being able to bring people, situations, and events together. I am a leader. It is not a bragging piece for me. It is my special gift – we all have at least one.”

*Happy  
Holidays*

Using her gift, Angela has persevered and made a way for herself and her children and many in her community. While managing work and family Angela became active in church and community groups guiding young people and advocating for families. As if it were not enough to excel as a paralegal, Angela got involved in politics and was sought after as a campaign organizer. As a paralegal, Angela helped Black farmers access benefits that had been denied to them; she helped mothers keep their children from being lost to the criminal justice system; and she championed equitable education practices in the public schools. With those experiences and armed with the realization that meaningful change can occur through planning and hard work Angela founded the Coalition of Concerned Families (CCF) and went to work at a youth center. CCF addresses community needs and issues in the areas of education, law enforcement, customer service, health care and politics. CCF has helped to create dialogue between those in power and the communities they serve. The organization has served hurricane victims, facilitated open political forums and created surveys to inform merchants of the needs and concerns of their consumers. Members of the CCF regularly attend school board, city council and county commission meetings, and appear in juvenile and circuit courts in order to inform the community of the processes and issues concerning each of those bodies.

But that's not all! Following the birth of her youngest son in 2001, Angela sought to quench her thirst for knowledge by enrolling at Wallace Community College Selma. Some asked her if she was too old, others if she was too busy to return to school, but she had no doubt that she could do it and she did it big! Even with a small child and work, Angela excelled, made the Dean's List, received the National Collegiate Minority Leadership Award, earned several scholarships and graduated with top honors. When she finished at WCCS Angela began work on her bachelor's degree in Social Work at Alabama State University where she was a member of Alpha Chi, representing the top 10% of honor students at ASU. She also served as the vice-president of Phi Alpha, the national honor society for social work, and was a member of the Whitney M. Young Social Work Club. Angela is a founding member and a past President of the ASU chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers, where she brought in leaders, sponsors and an advisory council to provide the members of NABSW with scholarships, leadership training/workshops and future job opportunities.

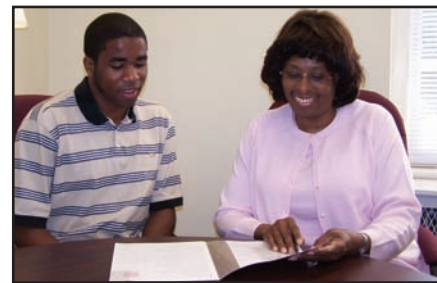
With three children in college and a young child at home, Angela commutes 160 miles roundtrip to attend graduate classes at UA and carry out the duties of her assistantship with the Coca Cola First Generation Scholars Program. Ultimately, her goal is to build a state-of-the-art family and community resource and development center in Selma. When asked how she does it all, Angela simply smiles and replies, "To whom much is given much is required. I try to lead by example. I present myself as friendly and as professional as possible. I know that God is watching over me and mine. I am His work in progress."

## LEARNING IS MAGNETIC...ARE YOU A CHARGED PARTICLE?

by  
Elva Bradley  
Director, Center for Teaching and Learning

Before you begin to think that this is an article about Physics, I will offer an immediate disclaimer. I am not a Physicist, nor am I even a borderline natural scientist of any kind. I ask this question metaphorically, because I believe that learning can be a magnetic force in your life. In other words, I see learning as something that you are drawn to and committed to staying with throughout your lifetime. Your commitment to learning is already demonstrated by your presence here. But what you gain from the experience of being here is about making choices. Alright, it is now time for another disclaimer...this is not a lecture, or at least it is not intended to be a lecture...so relax and keep reading. If it will make you feel a little more at ease, let me tell you what this article is leading to...it is an invi-

tation for a conversation about learning. You are now probably thinking that in order to have a conversation, two or more people have to be face to face, or at least digitally connected; D-I-G-I-T-A-L, ah, I said the word. Do you know that it has been asserted that today's students (or anyone for that matter) born after 1982, are members of the Gen-X, Millennial or Digital Generation? It seems that every generation of Americans must have a moniker that links them to the cultural artifacts of their youth. That being said, let's get back to our conversation about learning.



Elva Bradley talks with student

Learning inside and outside of the classroom can be an exciting, challenging, enlightening, and exhilarating experience.

Your time here at The University of Alabama provides a wonderful opportunity for you to prepare to become a citizen of the world. As a student, you are now building a foundation for that citizenship. All of your tomorrows will be influenced by what you do today. So what choices will you make? Will you choose to build your foundation on straw, or will you choose to use bricks? I implore you to take full advantage of all that is here, and choose the finest bricks for your foundation! Avail yourself of all the resources that will help you build that foundation. Seek help if you need it, offer help if you can give it, reach out to others, and be open to new adventures. During his lifetime the astronaut, Ronald E. McNair, who by the way was a Physicist, is known to have often said to students *Whether or not you reach your goals in life depends entirely on how well you prepare for them and how badly you want them. You're eagles! Stretch your wings and fly to the sky.*

When I began this article, I promised that it would not be a lecture, and I also invited you to participate in a conversation about learning. I want to keep my promise to you, but to do so I will need your help. You may help me by making a virtual visit to the Center for Teaching and Learning at [www.CTL.ua.edu](http://www.CTL.ua.edu) and see what is there for you. After you complete the virtual visit, I invite you to visit my office in 112 Osband Hall where we can continue this conversation (ten to fifteen minutes) about learning and how intriguing it is. If you are unable to pay me a visit in person, contact me online. I am really looking forward to our conversation. Metaphorically, the CTL is a magnetic force and I hope that you are a charged particle.

At the Center for Teaching and Learning we encourage students to "work smarter not harder." We are here to facilitate your success through exploring both the art and science of learning. In general the CTL provides programs and services to help students be academically successful. The categories of services are as listed here:

- Improve study techniques
- Succeed in UA courses
- Upgrade reading proficiencies
- Prepare for standardized entrance examinations

Embedded in the general categories are these specific programs and services:

- Independent Study Lab
- CTL Digital Video Library
- Tutorial Assistance Program
- Review and Help Sessions for Math, Chemistry and Physics
- Supplemental Instruction
- Reading Study Skills Workshops
- Study Skills Courses
- Freshman Compass Class
- CTL TV Channel 75 on Campus
- Kaplan-on-Campus Entrance Exam Review Program

In addition to visiting the CTL Web site, information about many CTL events is also available on the UA online calendar. Learn to manage your time more efficiently, learn how to eliminate stress by staying on tasks and not procrastinating. In addition to group assistance, one-on-one assistance is also available by appointment. More than anything else, we are energetically committed to assisting you in achieving your educational goals. Your success is our raison d'être.

## December 2007 SSS Degree Candidates

Student Support Services proudly announces SSS degree candidates for the upcoming commencement exercises on December 15, 2007:

Quovadis Berry  
Crystal Braxton  
Ciara Fitts  
Keara Grant  
D'Andre Green  
Kiya Holmes  
Eldrin Long  
Angel Moore  
Crystal Oliver  
Kimberly Parker  
Jennifer Rudolph  
Keenya Smiley  
Nichole Smith  
Cheaka Tillman  
Talitha Warren  
Anthony Williams  
Markeita Williams



## ARE YOU PLANNING TO GRADUATE IN MAY 2008?

**IF SO, CONTACT YOUR DIVISIONAL DEAN'S OFFICE (A&S, CBA, NURSING, ETC.) IMMEDIATELY TO OBTAIN THE APPLICATION FOR DEGREE.**

**YOU MUST COMPLETE AND FILE THE DEGREE APPLICATION NOW FOR MAY GRADUATION.**

## GRE IS CHANGING

Students planning to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) as part of their graduate school application process should be aware of the following:

- Two new types of test questions will be on the exam as early as November 2007, one of which is a math question and the other is a verbal question.
  - The new math question type will be a numerical entry, mixed in with the standard multiple choice questions, but students will be required to submit their answer without the help of answer choices.
  - The new verbal question type is text completion, which will be a vocabulary style question similar to the current "sentence completion" questions. Students will choose answers from a unique list of options, but must get all the blanks correct—there is no partial credit.
- Another change affecting SSS students is the fee structure. In the past, the GRE was free for SSS students. Effective immediately, there is a fee reduction of 50%. In order to qualify for the 50% fee reduction, students must have completed the FAFSA and have the results sent to UA. They must also submit a copy of the FAFSA results along with the registration and fee reduction form. Criteria for the fee reduction is as follows:
  - A dependent senior with a parental contribution of no more than \$1400.00, or
  - A self-supporting senior with a contribution of no more than \$1800.00, or
  - A self-supporting unenrolled college graduate with a contribution of no more than \$1800.00.

Questions regarding the GRE fee reduction should be directed to **Ms. Helen Allen or a member of her staff in the Office of Student Financial Aid, 106 Student Services, or 348-6756.**

## SSS COURSE OFFERINGS – SPRING 2008

Register now for these courses offered through SSS AT NO COST TO YOU!

- GS 111-001 and 002 – Academic Skills: Textbook Reading – 2 hours credit
- GS 111-003 and 004 – Academic Skills: College Success – 2 hours credit
- GS 111-005 – Academic Skills: Professional Development – 1 hour credit
- GS 111-006 and 007 – Academic Skills: College Writing – 1 hour credit

THESE COURSES ARE AVAILABLE ONLY TO SSS STUDENTS. In order to register, you must contact your counselor in advance of adding these courses.

Call Anthony Winston at 205 348 5376, e-mail [awinston@ctl.ua.edu](mailto:awinston@ctl.ua.edu), or Chris Lee at 205 348 6099, e-mail [cle@ctl.ua.edu](mailto:cle@ctl.ua.edu) to initiate registration.

## SPRING TUTORING AVAILABLE!

Students are strongly encouraged to complete requests for Spring 2008 tutoring services as soon as possible. Most tutoring slots are filled very early in the semester and spaces are limited.

SSS tutors can provide assistance in the following courses:

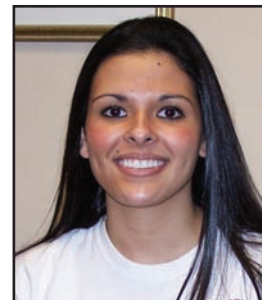


**EC 110, 111**  
**EN 101, 102**  
**MATH 100-227**  
**PH 101, 102, 105**  
**PY 101, 211,**  
**355/356, 372**  
**SP 100-390**  
**ST 260**

Please contact Dianne Teague at 348-5318 or [dteague@ctl.ua.edu](mailto:dteague@ctl.ua.edu) if you have any questions about the SSS Tutoring Program.

## AMANDA LYND – STUDENT ACHIEVER FOR NOVEMBER

Amanda Lynd is our Achiever of the Month for November. Amanda is originally from Bay Minnette, Alabama, where she graduated from Baldwin County High School in 2005. During her high school tenure she was a member of the Key Club, Friends of Exceptional Children, the National Honor Society, the Spanish Club, the soccer team, and the volleyball team. She was also a GMAC Scholar and served as Vice President of the Science Club.



Majoring in Nursing at The University of Alabama, Amanda is presently completing her clinicals at DCH in Northport. She plans to apply for her RN internship this summer. She is also active with University Christian Ministry at University Church of Christ. Her future plans are to become a nurse practitioner with a special interest in hospice care.

Amanda has this to say about her UA experience, "I've learned that I can truly overcome anything that comes my way with God's help and studying hard. A lot of people think nursing school is impossible, but anyone who has the study ethic and love for the welfare of others can do it."

## NEW SSS WEBSITE COMING!

Check this out! The Student Support Services Program will launch its new web site in January, 2008. If you want to be "in the know" on what's happening in SSS and stay informed of all the services and resources available to you, then check out the new design. The new web site will be extremely user friendly and packed with exciting news about current and former students. Our SSS newsletters will be available both in print and on the web so you can share our program and news with friends and family! All of the existing web features will still be available such as links to tutoring request forms, eligibility requirements and program application, Student Advisory Board and Peer Mentor information, and much, much, more. A sneak peak will be available in mid to late December. Don't miss it!

## MILTON NETTLES—STUDENT ACHIEVER FOR DECEMBER

Milton Nettles of Monroeville, Alabama has been named Student Support Services Achiever for the month of December. A Chemical and Biological Engineering major with a Chemistry minor, Milton has definitely gotten off to a great start at the Capstone. Not only is Milton a top scholar with a 4.00 GPA, but is very involved with various campus organizations including, the National Society of Black Engineers, Ambassadors to the College of Engineering (ACE), American Institute of Chemical Engineers, and the Afro-American Gospel Choir.



Some of Milton's honors include President's List, Alpha Lambda Delta, Carl A. Elliot Society, Earnestine Tucker Award, Freshman Forum MVP Award, Community Service Outstanding Volunteer Award, and several Student Support Services Awards for his superior academic performance. Milton attributes much of his success to hard work, great support from family and friends and most importantly, strong faith and a commitment to God. When asked about his favorite quote, he did not hesitate in choosing "To whom much is given, much is required." This helps Milton with his focus and sincere desire to help others. When Milton completes his degree at Alabama, he plans to continue his education with the ultimate goal of becoming a physician.

## NEW SSS PEER MENTOR



We are pleased to announce that Vonquesha Winn will be serving as an SSS Peer Mentor for the 2007-2008 school year. Vonquesha is originally from Livingston, Alabama where she graduated from

Livingston High School in 2004. While in high school she was a member of the Mighty Cougars Marching Band and was clarinet section leader. She was also a member of the SGA and 21st Century.

She is currently majoring in Healthcare Management and is a member of the Healthcare Management Society. In her spare time she volunteers with the Red Cross and the Tuscaloosa Pre-K Initiative. Her future plans are to pursue a Masters in Public Health and to eventually attend medical school and become a family practitioner.