



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA  
**GREENSBORO**

**TRIO**  
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

## VISIONS OF SUCCESS - ALDREA SPEIGHT

*Aldrea Speight is a senior at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro studying public health, with a concentration in community health education and a double minor in African American and African diaspora studies and sociology.*



**Aldrea's Success Story:** Over these past four years, I have grown both academically and personally through the help of the SSS program and staff members. I cannot help remembering walking into freshman orientation at UNCG with my aunt, who came as a parental figure in place of my parents after my father was hospitalized due to suffering two major strokes a couple of months earlier. Still to this day I remember us approaching the Special Support Services information table with smiling faces awaiting us. My aunt encouraged me to fill out the application form to apply for services, being that I was a first-generation college student. I guess she knew a great opportunity when she saw it because reflecting upon those moments, I believe that filling out those forms was one of the best decisions of my life up to date, due to the huge impact this service has had on my life.

From day one, this program has acted as a campus resource, a vital academic tool, a personal outlet for voicing my concerns and discovering who I am, and has helped to prepare

me for life after my undergraduate experience. I have been active in all components of Student Success Services, including receiving tutoring services, academic skill assistance, and professional development through personal counseling and workshops. I've even been employed in every student employment opportunity provided by the program, including lab monitor, tutor, and my current title of Student Success Assistant, in which I guide freshman and transfer students in successfully adjusting to UNCG. These positions not only helped to alleviate some of the financial stress of being solely responsible for funding my collegiate career (something many students face), but also to continuously assist in the development of marketable skills and qualifications, networking, and learning to brand myself in preparation for the competitive nature of graduate school, Ph.D. programs, and life after higher education in the work force. This has opened up many opportunities for me, including a permanent undergraduate position in Student Health Services, a study abroad experience last semester in South Africa, and invitations to academic and professional organizations.

I would love to provide a generic explanation for my success, such as my personality, level of determination, ambition, and gift of seeing life as one never ending goal for greatness, which are all true; but it's more than that. I believe that a major part of my success comes from the people in my life who have taken time to guide and mentor me. I agree that I am in the driving seat when it comes to my success, but being a first-generation student, having a program such as SSS to give direction, advise me when needed, be my support team, and relate to my struggles as a first-generation college student has been a tremendous pleasure that I hope others like me will be afforded in the future. There is no particular formula that I can have you jot down quickly on how to be successful (trust me if there were I would have tracked it down and become a best-seller by now). But, the advice that I can give on growing and being successful as a college student is simple. First, take advantage of as many opportunities and experiences as possible, don't limit yourself or box yourself in but rather diversify; be open to new things, new ideas, and new people; don't let life's roadblocks hinder you—just remind yourself that this too shall pass; network; be receptive of feedback and help from others such as the SSS program and always keep your end goal in mind.

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