



STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

WELCOME BACK FOR FALL 2024! - AMBER HUTFLES

Student Support Services is thrilled for the upcoming year! We have many great opportunities for our students to experience the culture that surrounds us, attend workshops to grow them personally and professionally, and join transfer trips to area universities, as they consider transferring to a 4-year college after HCC. We are pleased to see nearly 100 students sign up for our program so far, and will be processing applications over the next few weeks to welcome new students as members of SSS. As a reminder, we can only accept 140 students each year (we do have some students returning), so we encourage students to [apply now!](#)

We will promote SSS opportunities to our students via Canvas, email or social media, so please advise them to be active in these spaces. If you ever have any questions about our program, please do not hesitate to reach out by email (ahutfles@highlandcc.edu) or visit our offices in Irvin Hall on the second floor.

Thank you for your continued partnership to help our students be successful. Here's to a wonderful year ahead supporting Highland Community College students!

Amber Hutfles
Student Support Services Director

MEET OUR STAFF



AMBER HUTFLES - DIRECTOR

Hi all! I am excited to begin a new semester with you! I am Amber Hutfles; Student Support Services Director. I joined Highland Community College in September of 2023 as the SSS Retention and Tutoring Coordinator and am grateful to have transitioned to this leadership role in May. Through my educational background (I am a Scottie and a KSU Wildcat!) and professional experiences, I have grown a passion for building meaningful relationships with people, engaging and growing young adults, and community development.

In this role, I hope to continue to do exactly that! After returning to the area, my husband, Joel and I, began a small business, Hutfles Home Improvements, where we enjoy completing small home projects for people in the area. Let me know if you have a home project we can complete for you! Joel is also the Youth Minister at NorthRidge in Falls City, Nebraska. We love Jesus Christ and spending meaningful time with family and friends! We also enjoy coffee, travelling, staying active, ~and now~, gardening and remodeling our new home.



KIM BECHTOLD - TRANSFER ADVISOR

Hey everyone! My name is Kim Bechtold, and I am beginning my 12th year working with the SSS program as the Transfer Advisor. I was a transfer student myself and attended HCC for one year before transferring to Northwest Missouri State University. There I earned a bachelor's degree in merchandising with a minor in business. After working in the design field in Kansas City for a few years, I began my career in higher education working at Baker University's Overland Park campus as a Graduate Enrollment Advisor.

The best part of my job at Highland is getting to know our students and watching them achieve their goals. Helping students with the transfer process is one of our main goals in the SSS program, so this year to help bridge the gap we will be holding a Transfer/Eligibility workshop. We will be teaming up with the HCC Registrar and HCC Athletic Director to have a one-stop-shop for all questions transfer related. Transfer visits are also a great opportunity for students to step foot on a 4-year campus, we plan to take several transfer visits this year and will start the year off by touring Washburn University.

Outside of work, I enjoy hanging out with my husband (Josh) and two kids (Mason-13 & Mila-9). The kids keep us busy with football, basketball, baseball, dance, and many other activities throughout the year. We also enjoy attending HCC sporting events and watching our students do what they love!



RENAE WELCH - ACADEMIC SPECIALIST

Welcome to Highland! My name is Renae Welch, and this is my fourth year working as an English Academic Specialist for SSS. During college, I worked as a teaching assistant for both Business and English classes, before graduating with a bachelor's in Business Administration from Lincoln Christian University '20. Since graduating I have worked in a few different fields, but the main two have been in social media marketing and higher education. Two very different careers that I really enjoy, because both involve storytelling and a healthy dose of creativity. So, if you ever need help proof-reading assignments or writing papers, make sure you stop by and find me!

When I'm not at HCC, I spend my time chasing my Australian Shepherd (Rhea) who sometimes comes to visit the office, going on road trips, reading, and baking.



HEATHER MEJIA - RETENTION AND TUTORING COORDINATOR

Hi everyone! My name is Heather Mejia. This is my 6th year working at HCC, however, I recently transitioned into my new role as the Student Support Services Retention and Tutoring Coordinator. I grew up in the small rural town of Wathena, KS. I graduated from Highland Community College before transferring to Fort Hays State University where I earned a bachelor's degree in General Studies with a concentration in Psychological Studies and Human Services (Psychology & Sociology).

I'm very excited to be working more closely with our amazing students and to be a part of their success. Starting out the 2024/2025 academic year, I am especially excited for our new group of SSS tutors to begin working. They will be available Monday through Friday and Sunday to assist any SSS students with their academic needs. Helping students succeed in the classroom is a top priority of mine as well as maintaining high retention rates. I hope to encourage our SSS students to take advantage of the tutoring and many other resources that we provide. I'm also excited to be strengthening my skills as an Academic Advisor to best support our students. Finding the right classes can be overwhelming for students, so I'm happy to help them with that task. I'm looking forward to a great year and watching our students thrive in and out of the classroom!

Outside of the office, I love spending quality time with my husband (Tyler) and our four children (Camilia-13, Henley-10, Lane-8 and Tyson 1 ½).



KRISTEN JOHNSON - OFFICE ASSISTANT

Hi there! My name is Kristen Johnson, I am the Office Assistant for Student Support Services (SSS). Since I began working in the SSS office in April, I have been learning many skills to conduct myself in the professional world. One of the most important skills I am learning is to be confident in my abilities to fulfill what is required of me. I think being confident in my abilities, along with being humble enough to ask for direction, is vital in growing my skill set. I am currently working on completing my Associate of Art degree at Highland Community College. I plan to transfer to Washburn University after completing my degree. I aspire to become an Addiction Counselor.

I wear many hats in my life. Along with being a full-time student and the SSS office assistant, I enjoy serving others, travelling (which can be done on a budget!), spending time with my son and boyfriend, gardening, and art. I have a great feeling about this semester - I think it is going to be full of opportunities for growth towards a stronger HCC!



DEREK REMPE - MATH SPECIALIST

I am Derek Rempe, and I work as the Math Specialist for Student Support Services at Highland Community College. I have a bachelor's of science in Mathematics, and I love helping people grow in knowledge and confidence in all areas of life, especially math! I'm looking forward to seeing how students reach and exceed their goals in their math classes this year!

I'm a follower of Jesus, husband to Shannon, dad to three little boys, college pastor with Christian Challenge (at HCC), and coach middle school sports.

SSS FALL EVENTS

SEPTEMBER
11TH
12PM

STAY ORGANIZED WORKSHOP

Students will learn how to use organization tools like planners and Rocket Books to stay on top of their assignments. They will also review first day handouts from their classes and see how to check assignment due dates in Canvas. Lunch will be provided for all who attend!



FINANCIAL LITERACY TRIP

Students will attend a financial literacy workshop at Thrivent Financial in Hiawatha before touring several local businesses (Jack Rabbit Coffee, Blue Moon Tea, and New China Restaurant). They also will get to hear presentations from the Hiawatha Chamber and the Parks and Rec. department to learn more about the area.

SEPTEMBER
18TH
9AM-2PM



FALL SOCIAL

Students will tour Klinefelter Farm and learn more about its history. During the evening, they will also get to carve pumpkins, enjoy a bowl of hot soup, and hear from an HCC leader about professional development.



SPORTS ELIGIBILITY/TRANSFER WORKSHOP

Students will be able to get all of their eligibility and transfer questions answered during this helpful workshop. HCC's Registrar and Athletic Director will be there to help students feel confident in transferring to a four year school. A rep from MWSU will also be present.

OCTOBER
15TH
12:30PM

MORE SSS PROGRAMMING COMING SOON!