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Challenges Into Triumphs

Q&A With Sheyna Mikeal

Q 1: As Director, College Success, you work with nearly 200 students each year entering college, currently in college, and entering into the workforce. What would you say you enjoy most and why?

A 1: I honestly enjoy talking with the students. I like catching up and seeing how they are doing. I like problem solving and helping them plan for the future. My relationships with the students fuels me.

Q 2: Can you share with us a time when you had to pull out "all of the stops" to help a student in their journey to college completion.

A 2: I ask until I can't ask anymore. I really believe that you won't know until you ask. A lot of our students will give up once they receive a "no," but I always ask if they spoke to someone else, did they ask for an alternative, etc. This persistence has helped students this semester receive grant money that they thought they lost, gain acceptance into a college that told them no, and reduced an outstanding tuition account balance. There are always exceptions, appeals, and other people to speak with, and I am teaching them that the first no doesn't always mean no.

Q 3: Is there any student that stands out in particular of whom you're really proud and what makes them a standout?

A 3: Shamerra, a 2019 high school graduate, decided not to go straight to college after high school. She recently reached out to me for assistance with college enrollment for the fall semester. With help drafting and submitting an admission's appeal, she will be a first-year student at Bowie State University. She said that she appreciated my constant communications, which served as an ongoing reminder that we're always here to support her at Building STEPS. She said she felt comfortable reaching out to me, reinforcing that although I may not hear back from all the students, the information is getting through to them. They feel comfortable coming to me even if we haven't spoken in quite some time. This is really the boost that keeps me going.