

Your support ensures the Next Generation's Access to Higher Education...



... and directly benefits two important programs at George Mason University, EIP and STEP.

A PATH TO COLLEGIATE SUCCESS

The Early Identification Program (EIP), George Mason University's college access program, supports the academic, career, and personal/social development of first-generation college-bound students in Northern Virginia. EIP has graduated over 2,000 students, and over 95% enroll in college annually. Currently, over 200 EIP alumni are attending George Mason University. EIP's mission is to improve students' access to higher education and improve their quality of life by providing academic enrichment, personal development, and community engagement. Each year a new class of rising eighth graders from seven school districts in Northern Virginia are accepted into EIP. The program is a 5-year commitment, from 8th - 12th grades, and high school members dedicate three weeks of their summer to EIP's Summer Academy, held on the Fairfax and Prince William campuses. Throughout the year, EIP students receive weekly tutoring and mentoring, college exam preparation, math and science enrichment, STEM career exploration, family workshops, parent programs, leadership development, cultural experiences, career readiness, and service learning

"The program was really grounding to me since I was meeting like-minded students on a regular basis. They, along with the EIP mentors, helped me not lose sight of my goal of going to college."

Nora Kurtishi, EIP Class of 2022

Ensuring the Next Generation's Access to Higher Education



"The STEP program was a program that helped me grow physically and mentally. I committed to the gym for those 6 weeks and now is a habit I have of working out. I learned how to take care of myself away from home. Getting up by myself, doing my own laundry, doing my own things without anyone telling me to do it. This program brought the best out of me."

~Ismelda Marquez Sorto
STEP 2023 Scholar

"I just want to say that it was the best program I've ever experienced in my life! Even though I regret not getting to fully have convos with everyone I am blessed to have had STEP in my life I don't know how my first year of college would have been like without getting to know everyone from STEP so again I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart."

~Daniel Soto
STEP 2023 Scholar

"I had a great time during my STEP Summer. I learned a lot from my mentors and GAs and grew a lot. I believe that all first-gen students should get this chance as we do not have any guide to college. We need someone to guide and help us through college, so that we can build a better tomorrow for us and for all the other first gens."

~Mashrab Zaman
STEP 2023 Scholar

"It was great. I overcame my timid personality, made great time friends, and had an amazing time. Overall, I think the STEP program was the best thing to have happened to me because it introduced me to a new lifestyle that I did not know I could live. I'm truly thankful!"

~Joseph Sanchez
STEP 2023 Scholar

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

Mason's commitment to historically underrepresented students has been visible through summer bridge programs in various iterations over the past several decades. Since 2005, the First-Gen+ Center at George Mason University, has specifically championed first-generation student success through the continued commitment to the Student Transition Empowerment Program (STEP). STEP aims to enhance the recruitment, engagement, and retention of first-generation college students accepted to the university. STEP follows a residential summer bridge model, hosting between 50-60 students for 6 weeks during the summer during which students take college-level courses, attend skills building workshops and build cultural competency through community excursions. STEP empowers participants through academic skill development, access to resources, community building, self-discovery, and the global citizenship needed to thrive in today's college environment and workforce. Following the summer program, participants who successfully transition from the summer continue as STEP scholars at Mason. STEP Scholars receive continuous support during their academic career including access to STEP scholarship funds, dedicated success coaches, professional staff advisement, ongoing mentorship, and co-curricular programming.