

**Summer Transition Enrichment Program  
Experience 2024  
Undergraduate Summer Bridge Program  
At American University  
Developed by the Center for Diversity & Inclusion**



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## Introduction

This is the Summer Transition Enrichment Program, known as STEP, curriculum that outlines the philosophy, pedagogy, and implementation of this signature experience that welcomes up to 40 students prior to the start of their first fall semester at American University. STEP is a summer Trio/Bridge/Upward Bound Program that runs for 6 to 7 weeks (about 1 and a half months) over the summer into a student's first year at American University. STEP is a part of the Center for Diversity & Inclusion (CDI) as a cohort program alongside the support and outreach to District Scholars.

## Facilitators

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## The Center for Diversity & Inclusion

The mission of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) is to advance American University's commitment to respecting and valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison for students, staff and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. To achieve this mission, CDI is dedicated to:

- Enhancing LGBTQIA+, multicultural, first generation, and women's experiences on campus;
- Promoting student retention, graduation, and academic achievement;
- Collaborating with campus partners — particularly those that work with international students, students with disabilities, and students with active religious affiliations — to create a safe, supportive and empowering community for all, regardless of identity.

In CDI we envision an American University where people of all identities and experiences are understood, appreciated, and fully included in the community and where equitable treatment and outcomes prevail.

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion opened in Fall 2012, it was created as a part of AU's 2008 Strategic Plan. Specifically, the Center works to achieve Transformational Goal #5, which states that "American University embraces diversity in its broadest sense, including diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, disability, socioeconomic standing, and intellectual viewpoint. The university views diversity as an essential component of the educational experience of our students and an important indicator of our success in adapting to the dramatic demographic shifts that will occur in the decades ahead." Read about the President's Council of Diversity and Inclusion.

Currently, CDI frames the definitions of Diversity and inclusion through the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) created.

- According to the AAC&U, diversity is defined as "individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations)."
- The AAC&U defines inclusion as "the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity — in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect — in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions."

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion will always initiate conversations and implement programming in the spirit of these definitions to promote a supportive environment where all students are celebrated, valued, and acknowledged.

In providing this context, CDI assists in the foundation of how the STEP Experience fits into the greater ecosystem that you as an AU student have as support as you embark on this journey. Your engagement in STEP may be for 6 to 7 weeks (about 1 and a half months) but CDI continues to be a beacon that you can come back to. With that, STEP is an experience that extends throughout your entire college career. Beyond the summer, students will be highly encouraged to continue their academic & college development through workshops and strengthening campus connections. This is paramount in making sure you know why STEP exists and how it fits within CDI and American University. This foundation should empower you to engage in your college experience meaningfully.

## STEP Community of Care Statement

At the Center for Diversity and Inclusion at American University, we are committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all members of our community. In line with our values of restorative justice and student affairs, we believe in the power of building a strong community of care. As such, we have crafted this statement to outline our shared commitments and expectations for creating a space that is mindful, intentional, and aware.

1. **Mindfulness:** We strive to cultivate a community where every individual is encouraged to be present, open-minded, and engaged. We recognize the importance of active listening, suspending judgment, and being aware of our own biases. By practicing mindfulness, we seek to understand and respect the diverse perspectives, experiences, and identities that make up our community.
2. **Intentionality:** We are dedicated to creating an environment where our words, actions, and decisions are purposeful and thoughtful. We encourage all members of our community to approach their interactions with care and consideration. By being intentional, we aim to foster a sense of trust, empathy, and authenticity in our relationships, creating a safe and supportive space for everyone.
3. **Awareness:** We value self-awareness and awareness of others as essential elements of our community. We recognize the importance of continuously educating ourselves about diverse cultures, identities, and social issues. We commit to challenging our own biases and assumptions, while seeking to understand the experiences and perspectives of those around us. Through heightened awareness, we strive to promote inclusivity, justice, and equity in our community.
4. **Speaking with Care:** We encourage all members of our community to communicate to promote respect, empathy, and understanding. We believe in the power of language to both

heal and harm, and therefore, we seek to use our words to uplift and support one another. We value constructive dialogue and aim to express our thoughts and opinions in a manner that promotes growth, learning, and collaboration.

5. **Moving with Self-Awareness & Kindness:** We embrace the principle of self-awareness-kindness, recognizing that compassion and empathy are essential in our interactions. We strive to approach others with kindness, generosity, and patience, recognizing that everyone has their own unique experiences and challenges. Through acts of self-awareness and kindness, we create an environment where individuals can thrive, knowing they are valued and supported.
6. **Disagreeing without Being Disagreeable:** We acknowledge that differences of opinion are natural and important in any vibrant community. However, we strive to disagree respectfully, seeking common ground and understanding. We value constructive dialogue and open-mindedness, recognizing that through thoughtful engagement and active listening, we can learn from one another and strengthen our collective efforts.

By embracing these principles of mindfulness, intentionality, awareness, speaking with care, moving with self-awareness & kindness, and disagreeing without being disagreeable, we aim to foster a community of care where all individuals feel valued, respected, and supported. We invite each member of our community to join us in upholding these commitments as we work towards a more inclusive and equitable future together.

### Existing with AIR

Throughout STEP students who participate are asked to move through the experience upholding and displaying the tenets of AIR (Accountability, Integrity, and Respect).

Student accountability is important because it encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and actions. Students, in turn, learn to value their work and likely increase their levels of confidence. This prepares students for life beyond college, whether it be furthering their education, going into the workforce, or a combination of both.

Students in STEP will infuse Accountability through the following:

- Creating and maintaining a “just right” learning environment.
- Uphold STEP expectations/responsibilities.
- Taking ownership of their own learning.
- Participating actively in self-assessments that will assist them in reflecting on their behavior and learning.
- Holding themselves accountable by being a peer leader to make sure that all who are participating are engaged and active in their continued learning and development.

CDI knows that each incoming class will face challenges. Whether that is through racial inequities, temptations from social media, and pressures to perform in school despite what COVID-19 did to their learning, these are just a few challenges that define a student's development.

Through STEP, students can meet the moment by cultivating the skills needed to act with integrity in these challenges. Integrity means doing the right thing and acting in ways aligned with your values. For our STEP Cohort, that means being honest in academic situations despite pressures to succeed, listening to their own inner voice about what is right, and behaving in ways that earn the trust of people around them, as well as standing up for themselves and for others in social situations. It takes moral courage for students to stand up against injustices and act in the interest

of fairness and justice. Standing up against discrimination based on race, gender, sexual identity, or religion may involve risk-taking, inconvenience, or disapproval from others—like telling someone that their racist joke was unacceptable or speaking up in class when someone makes an offensive comment about another student.

At its most basic level, integrity involves “doing the right thing.” But, of course, what is considered “the right thing” for one person is not necessarily “the right thing” for another. Doing the right thing reflects students’ values and prior experiences, which can vary tremendously. Wading into the sea of challenging issues related to contradictory values means that students that participate in STEP need to be brave and allow conflicting values to emerge and be discussed openly. But also know that CDI will step in when students hold values or opinions that are harmful to themselves or others. It is not enough to allow different values to coexist; integrity means preventing harm to others, taking a stand against injustice, and supporting equal human rights.

Students should practice integrity because:

- Maintaining academic integrity is important for honesty, trust, and respect.
- It acknowledges the contributions of others and helps you learn.
- It fosters a fair learning environment.
- It promotes critical thinking and deep learning.
- It builds trust, credibility, and ethical conduct.

Respect is an important component of personal identity and interpersonal relationships. Respect is further defined in the ability to value and honor another person, even if we do not approve or share everything he or she does. It is accepting the other person and not trying to change them. Our differences are positive because it creates our identity. This means that individual differences exist, but above all to understand that as members of society, we are equal. All people are due respect for the simple fact of being people. Equality is in balance. But it’s also fundamental for oneself since you will value others to the extent that you are able to value yourself.

Through STEP, we ask participants to think through the various types: self-respect, for others, social norms, and values.

- For self: This kind refers to the ability to respect oneself, to value and appreciate oneself. Accepting oneself regardless of what others think.
- For others: This kind refers to the act of accepting and considering another person, even though there may be differences between them or the way they think.
- Social norms: This kind refers to the ability to respect all the norms that govern society.
- For values: This kind refers to the ability to honor our own principles.
- Culture: This type of value refers to the ability to recognize other beliefs and respect them.

When students actively hold on to accountability, integrity, and respect their experience in STEP is more impactful and meaningful. Students allow themselves to build upon the foundation that will see them smoothly transition into their time at American University. However, this process does not look the same for every student which is why throughout STEP there will be opportunities for reflection, growth, and expanded learning.

## The STEP Philosophy

This experience has been designed to ease the transition to college and support postsecondary success by providing students with the academic skills and social resources needed to succeed in a

college environment. This STEP Experience provides participants with the necessary tools and skillsets to succeed as active and successful, members of the AU (American University) community. We cultivated a space to provide participants with a necessary knowledge toolkit that will allow them to not only learn about themselves and their communities, but how to engage in an ever-changing and interconnected world.

Through classroom instruction, workshops, and programs, we encourage STEP students to build the capacity to be Self-Aware, Reflective, and Justice-Centered individuals, committed to building a world worthy of their purpose. It is essential that we create a foundation for STEP students to be active participants (in their learning). All of us in the experience must be open and display transparent honesty with our thoughts and feelings to create an environment that is inclusive and embracing of all its members. This will be accomplished through your engagement in our STEP experience through reflections and assessments cataloging your progress.

Our STEP experience will progressively build upon itself. For this reason, it is important that everyone attends all sessions (see schedule), be prepared for, engage, and meet all the deadlines for tasks and group work. We are excited about this journey and believe you will be too.

Through involvement with STEP, we draw and solidify the connection to the students experience and work within AU Core, an experience that will connect with the student throughout their four years at American University.

## The AU Core Curriculum

American University's inquiry-based liberal arts education, challenges students to put their curiosity to use inside and outside of the classroom. AU Core fosters agile thinking that prepares students to engage in a complex, constantly changing world. The AU Core begins with a first-year experience and foundational skills, highlights essential habits of mind, then integrates these skills and habits with the student's major, and culminates in a capstone. At each stage, AU Core offers sustained attention to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The three components of the AU Core Curriculum include foundation courses, Habits of Mind courses, and integrative courses. The AU Core is different from standard general education programs. Older models of "gen-ed" emphasized learning content from a broad distribution of fields. But our contemporary world makes content instantly accessible. Instead, the AU Core trains students in what to do with the overwhelming amount of information at our disposal: to develop habits and perspectives that allow us to critically assess, engage with, and deploy this knowledge.

## The American University Experience (AUx)

AUx is a full-year AU Core Curriculum course specially designed for first year and transfer students transitioning into their first year of college at AU. Students will complete AUx1 in their first semester (1.5 credits) and then complete AUx2 in their second semester (1.5 credits) \*. To support student learning and development, AUx classes are co-facilitated by an Instructor and a Peer Facilitator. AUx uses a co-facilitation model as one of the ways to flatten the hierarchy structure in the classroom environment. The AUx Program is committed to incorporating anti-racist principles into curriculum design and pedagogy.

Drawing on many academic disciplines and on student development theory, it is designed to help students navigate their academic, social, cultural, and psychological adjustment to university life. Themes covered include freedom of expression; campus resources; exploring and expressing



identities; building academic success; budgeting time and money; health and wellness; finding community; rights and responsibilities; diversity, bias, and privilege; and setting goals for success. In AUx, one will become part of a small community of learners.

## Writing Studies Program

The Writing Studies Program offers the most important sequence of courses for students making the transition from high school to college at American University. Students often start with many assumptions about writing. They may regard writing as a rarified skill available only to a few. And they may, further, regard themselves in a limited sense as students faced with writing tasks rather than as writers seeking to engage with readers—to inform, instruct, or persuade. They may try to decode an assignment and produce a single "correct response" for a teacher, without a wider and more complicated sense of audience and purpose. And increasingly, they may have been trained to produce formulaic essays that meet the requirements of standardized tests and college applications but don't meet the demands of college-level academic writing. In fact, they may see a conflict between intellectual creativity—originality—and academic convention.

In the Writing Studies Program, we encourage students to think as writers and scholars—anticipating the responses of a reader, exploring the depth and breadth of a subject through research and analysis, and working with language and form to best express their understanding. Our work with students prepares them for the writing that they'll do in the academy and for a lifelong process of intellectual discovery.

The Writing Studies Program, therefore, offers writing-centered, interdisciplinary courses. These courses promote approaches to writing that can be transferred to all academic disciplines. We base our instruction on the premise that while most students are not fluent in "academic English," the skills involved in academic prose can be taught and learned in the classroom.

When thinking about the foundational blocks that shape a new student's experience, the STEP Experience is essential that not only forges a student in the challenges and successes. It additionally serves as a bedrock ongoing support in the multiple spaces the student will and can exist in. This can only happen in the intentional framing around AU core.

## The STEP Summer Experience

### STEP's Pedagogical Approach | How to College: What to Know Before You Go (and When You're There)

*Brenner, A., & Schwartz, L. (2019). How to college: What to know before you go (and when you are there). St. Martin's Griffin.*

The backdrop of this curriculum is based on the content from the book, "How to College: What to Know Before You Go (And When You're There)" By Andrea Malkin Brenner and Laura Hope Schwartz. Both Andrea and Laura are/were a part of the American University experience as Faculty & Staff Educators. This book focuses on how one makes the transition from High School to College in a meaningful way that allows one to be in control of the narrative.

How to College focus on the transition from high school—and home—to college can be stressful. Students and parents often arrive on campus unprepared for what college is really like. Academic standards and expectations are different from high school; families aren't present to serve as "scaffolding" for students; and first years must do what they call "adulging." Nothing in the college

admissions process prepares students for these new realities. As a result, first-year college students report higher stress, more mental health issues, and lower completion rates than in the past. In fact, up to one third of first-year college students will not return for their second year—and colleges are reporting an increase in underprepared first-year students. The book draws on the authors' experience teaching, writing curricula, and designing programs for thousands of first-year college students over decades.

The purpose of this book is to provide you with the necessary foundational tools that you will be able to flex and get comfortable with as you navigate the STEP experience. Beyond that, it will equip you to move boldly toward the start of your first year at American University. Students will find throughout the STEP summer experience chapters of the book have been implemented into engaging sessions that will charge students with thinking critically on how to best tackle common college struggles or situations. With this approach, we believe students will feel confident in being intentionally prepared to enter the college environment.

We use the *How-to College* book as a foundational anchor. Each week will have a theme to center the content covered and connect to an AU campus partnership that will serve around that realigns with the cohort's transition to American University. This is seen through the philosophy that frames the curriculum development. At American University through the Center for Diversity & Inclusion we take a philosophical approach in how we view and take in curriculum development.

We recognize that our STEP curriculum provides a foundation that instills in you, the STEP Cohort, formulating beliefs, arguments, and assumptions when creating value judgements. Philosophy helps develop a broad outlook to helping begin the quest of asking questions relating to what my higher education experiences entail does, what subjects do I believe are important, how should I learn, and what materials do I look to or even build upon. Our STEP curriculum through the use of *How to College* provides the starting point in the decision-making process and your educational journey in totality.

## Requirements of STEP Participation

All participants that opt-in to participate in STEP are required to fully attend all aspects of the experience. This includes but is not limited to:

- Workshops
- Campus Partner Presentations
- Academic Classes (Math/Philosophy & Pre College Writing)
- Daily Tutoring
- STEP Related Experiences outlined in the STEP Schedule

Failure to not attend mandatory pieces outlined above will result in the removal of a participant in the STEP Experience.

Also, each participant must sign an agreement regarding their commitment to participate in STEP.

## Community Philosophy within STEP

Right from birth, human beings are accustomed to living among people. It is a practice/ability that stays innate, and active throughout the lifetime. As you graduate, you are ready to embark on a new expedition and are on the pursuit of collecting tips for building a community in college. A quick and easy tip is to attend as many college events as possible. Building a community in college becomes a

necessity, primarily for the sole purpose of surviving the next few years in the educational institution.

Humans are social animals, and seldom a lone wolf. They live, work, and function better in the warmth of a like-minded community. Relationships built during school, college, and work are instrumental in shaping an individual's life, broadening their outlook in general. A new city, a new residence hall, new surroundings, can be quite overwhelming. As a starter kit for college, we have prepared a list of the top 8 tips to help you build your niche community in college. These tips will also be what you will experience as part of STEP.

If you think high school is difficult, you are misled. If you consider joining your dream college as the only tasking affair, you are misled again. The real challenge is fitting into your college culture, adapting to the inevitable changes (that comes with college), and surviving your tenure in the school. All the aforementioned 'challenges' alleviate considerably when you are with your community. The community you build not only helps you understand the ropes but also supports you in times of need or adversity.

- Make the first move for engagement
- Be a part of college events
- The perks of the bigger fish in the fishbowl
- Connect over social media
- Patience is your key
- You can build your community in the classroom
- Invite people to engage outside of the classroom
- Rejection is the pillar of success

Building the right community in college is an integral practice one needs to formulate right from the first day of stepping foot on your college campus. Venture in the crowds, pay heed to all activities and develop an approachable persona - these are the prime requisites for networking. Your college community is often deemed as the alpha and omega. They become your 'life-supporting systems' throughout the school, thereby amplifying the importance of participating in the 'right' community.

Within STEP, we recognize the value of building the right kind of community that supports you and your needs. Throughout the experience you will engage in workshops, training, as well as small group dialogues with your peers and CDI to piece together what your needs and wants are as you navigate the building of your community in a meaningful manner.

### Cluster Experiences

With the STEP Experience there will be times throughout the summer where we will engage in cluster experiences. The purpose for cluster experiences is to take a moment and dig deeper into what you are learning within the STEP summer experience and how you would actively apply and connect the context to your college experience. This will also be a time for students to form connections and share vulnerabilities of being a college student.

This will be a vital tool as throughout your college experience you will need to use a level of critical thinking to work through how you want to craft your higher education journey along with learning to be a human. The clusters will also provide a grounding space for students to learn to productively and effectively communicate with individuals that have different identities.

## Learning Outcomes for STEP Experience

- **Defining Identity** - Students will clarify personal values, demonstrate respect and appreciation of others' ideas and opinions, recognize how their behavior impacts others, provide leadership that enhances the dignity and respect of individuals and promote the common good.
  - Through interculturalism, students will develop and demonstrate an understanding of their identity and value of others' culture by learning about their history, beliefs, languages and/or practices toward inclusive communities.
- **Establishment of Academic Resilience** – Students will establish an academic success framework by class participation and follow through on assignments being submitted.
  - Using analytical thinking students will apply quantitative and/or qualitative reasoning skills to solve problems, evaluate claims and support conclusions.
- **Effective Communication**- Students will individually and/or collaboratively communicate across multiple expressive modes, applying relevant learned knowledge, and demonstrating information literacy and research skills.
- **Equity and Social Justice**- Students will evaluate the influence of power and privilege, identify shared and unshared meaning, and/or analyze the sources of their perspectives in the advancement of equity and social justice.
  - Identify and describe how one's own perspectives, experiences, and background influence the interactions with others when working on a team.
  - Identify systematic barriers to inclusivity in each situation and describe the impact power and privilege may have on individuals in the context of the situation.

## Classroom Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate academic reading, math, written, and oral communication skills through metacognition and the development of critical thinking and comprehension strategies.
- Recognize themselves as learners and citizens capable of accomplishing their academic and professional goals and contributing to the larger community.
- Engage in campus activities, utilize campus resources, and demonstrate the ability to transition to and navigate through academic and professional environments.
- Use interpersonal skills and strategies in a multicultural context to work collaboratively, solve problems, and perform tasks.

## STEP Experience Session Objectives

1. **Self-Awareness:** Utilize critical thinking and reflection skills to identify personal strengths and areas of growth.
2. **Leadership:** Develop a greater understanding of the elements of leadership as a function you can utilize to empower and self-advocate for yourself and others.
3. **Group Interactions:** Recognize, practice, and participate in constructive group dynamics.
4. **Community Growth:** Understand multifaceted role in community development as an entity but also as part of a collective.

## STEP Sessions Dates, Themes, & Topical Content

Over the course of the six weeks, the Center for Diversity & Inclusion in partnership with campus resources will provide an AU connection to what is available as it pertains to resources and tools.

With campus partners presenting their office and what it offers, it provides a real-time connection for the STEP Cohort to create, implement, and maintain their network they are building through the STEP Experience.

Additionally, each week has a theme to center around the content we will cover. Below are the themes for each week and its corresponding chapters that will be highlighted:

Week	Weekly Theme	How to College Topics
Week One	Welcome to a New Adventure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the STEP Experience</li> <li>▪ Sharing Living Spaces</li> <li>▪ Experiencing your College Peers</li> <li>▪ Understanding Financial Aid</li> </ul>
Week Two	Money is Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scholarships</li> <li>▪ Personal Budgeting</li> <li>▪ First-Year Advising</li> </ul>
Week Three	Self-Care is Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifying proper Self-Care techniques</li> <li>▪ Access to Care at College</li> <li>▪ Student Support Services on campus- who and where are they</li> </ul>
Week Four	Expanding your college network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Campus Resources</li> <li>▪ Academic Departments</li> </ul>
Week Five	Understanding the Academic Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explaining Academic Standards and why they are Important</li> <li>▪ Reading and Studying Skills</li> <li>▪ Identifying Academic Support</li> </ul>
Week Six	Ready, Set, Go	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding &amp; Navigating AU</li> <li>▪ Learning Leadership in College</li> <li>▪ Study Abroad</li> </ul>

## Experiential Learning & Engagement

Learning doesn't only take place in the classroom. CDI recognizes that it is equally important to put theory into practice. Through the STEP Experience, the cohort will engage in on- and off-campus activities that will challenge students to learn further than in the classroom's four walls. Students will have the opportunity to explore the DC metro area, participate in community service, and engage in activities that strengthen their skills in team building, problem-solving, and leadership.

## Student Motivation is Crucial

Motivation is the fuel that drives students toward success, serving as a fundamental pillar in their academic journey. Understanding the significance of student motivation unveils the critical role it plays in shaping learning experiences and outcomes.

## Impact of Motivation on Learning

Motivation acts as a catalyst in shaping learning outcomes by fostering deep engagement in and out of the classroom. When students are motivated, they exhibit a heightened willingness to explore new concepts, participate actively in discussions, and persevere through challenges. This intrinsic

drive not only enhances academic performance but also boosts overall student well-being. The positive correlation between motivation and learning is evident in the increased focus, retention of information, and enthusiasm that motivated students exhibit.

### Connection Between Motivation and Achievement

The connection between student motivation and achievement is profound. Motivated students tend to set ambitious goals and persistently work towards accomplishing them, both academically and personally. Their heightened sense of determination and self-discipline drives them to surmount obstacles and excel in various facets of life. By nurturing a strong sense of motivation, students pave the way for continuous growth, resilience, and success in their academic endeavors.

### Campus Partner Workshops

Workshops will be presented to STEP in partnership with the CDI staff and AU campus partners while in line with the weekly themes previously outlined. We value the content and context in which our Campus Partners frame what college is from a broad view perspective on the scope of their office's work. However, we know that this is just the tip of the iceberg. Having our Campus Partners be a part of STEP encourages and empowers the students to begin to create a network built upon their own outlined success. Campus Partners that have presented in the past to STEP are but not limited to:

- Health Services
- Center for Wellbeing and Psychological Services
- Housing & Residence Life
- Career Services
- Center for Student Involvement
- Center for Leadership & Community Engagement
- New Student & Family Programs
- Alumni Relations & Advancement
- Office of Financial Aid
- AU Central
- AU Core Faculty
- And many more...

### STEP Community Service Schedule

Beginning in Summer 2024, in partnership with the Center for Leadership and Community Engagement (CLCE), we will do two service projects within the seven wards of DC. These service projects will be comprised of a walking tour and history on Monday with service commencing on Friday. These opportunities will take place in the third and sixth week of the STEP Experience.

### Final Week of STEP

The Final Week of STEP is a pivotal moment as it marks the end of one experience and the preparedness of embarking on the next new chapter that lies in front of them. This week can include a Alumni Networking Event, Passion Presentation, completing the STEP Assessment other peices that close this chapter and open to what lies ahead of you as an incoming American University student.

## Academic Schedule

STEP will happen during Summer Session D, comprising the second 6-week period.

Monday & Wednesday	PHIL 120 (Philosophy)	9:00am-Noon	Faculty TBD
Monday & Wednesday	MATH 125	9:00am-Noon	Faculty TBD
Tuesday & Thursday	Precollege Writing Section 1	1:00pm-3:00pm Office Hours from 3:15- 4:15pm	Faculty TBD
Tuesday & Thursday	Precollege Writing Section 1	1:00pm-3:00pm Office Hours from 3:15- 4:15pm	Faculty TBD

When students accept STEP and are confirmed by the CDI staff, students will fill out an intake form in which they will provide selections of the two for credit courses. Precollege Writing is a mandatory course that every step student will take as this will provide the groundwork for Writing Studies in which is a part of AU core for First-Year students. For the for-credit courses, CDI will do their best to accommodate selections but cannot guarantee that cohort members will get their top choice.

## Tutoring

Tutoring plays a vital role in shaping the educational journey of students, offering them personalized support and guidance outside the traditional classroom setting. Whether it's struggling with a particular subject or aiming to excel academically, tutoring provides a nurturing environment where students can enhance their learning experience. With individualized attention, targeted instruction, and supportive mentorship, tutoring empowers students to overcome challenges, build confidence, and achieve their academic goals.

It is important for college students because it provides them with personalized attention and support that may not always be possible in a regular classroom setting. Students have different learning styles and paces, and tutoring can adapt to their specific needs. With a tutor, students are empowered and encouraged to ask questions freely, get extra explanations, and work on areas where they may be struggling. This boosts their confidence, helps them understand concepts better, and improves their overall academic performance. Tutoring also helps students develop good study habits, learn effective problem-solving techniques, and become more independent learners. Ultimately, tutoring gives students the extra guidance and encouragement they need to reach their full potential and succeed academically.

Here are some of the keyways in which tutoring helps students thrive and succeed.

- Personalized Attention and Support
- Improved Academic Performance
- Increased Confidence and Motivation
- Enhanced Study Skills and Strategies
- Overall Personal Growth
- Individualized Pace and Progression



- Overcoming Learning Obstacles
- Reinforcement and Review
- Confidence in Test Preparation
- Support for Advanced Learning

Additionally, tutoring fosters motivation and a positive attitude towards learning. Witnessing their progress under the guidance of a tutor boosts students' enthusiasm and drives them to excel academically. This renewed motivation leads to improved performance across various subjects and a greater investment in their education. Tutoring provides individualized pace and progression, helps students overcome learning obstacles, reinforces and reviews key concepts, builds confidence in test preparation, and offers support for advanced learners. These benefits contribute to students' academic success, confidence, and overall growth, ensuring that they receive the necessary guidance and resources to thrive in their educational journey.

Each STEP Student must attend mandatory tutoring throughout the STEP Experience. In partnership with Undergraduate & Academic Support tutoring for Writing, Philosophy, and Math will be available for each student. Beyond tutoring this will be a dedicated time for students to complete their homework. This resource is meant to help establish a healthy and productive study support system and environment that can be translated to the Fall 2025 semester.

## Course Participation & AU Academic Standards and Expectations

### Student Code of Conduct

The central commitment of American University is the development of thoughtful, responsible human beings in the context of a challenging yet supportive academic community. The Student Code of Conduct is designed to benefit the American University community and to assist in forming the highest standards of ethics and morals among its members. By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Student Code of Conduct, and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code.

### The Honor Pledge

I understand that as a student at the American University, I am a member of our academic and social community. I recognize the importance of my education and the value of experiencing life in such an integrated community. I believe that the value of my education and degree is critically dependent upon the academic integrity of the university community, and so to maintain our academic integrity, I pledge to:

- Complete all assignments and examinations by the guidelines given to me by my instructors.
- Avoid plagiarism and any other form of misrepresenting someone else's work as my own.
- Adhere to the Standards of Conduct as outlined in the Academic Honor Code.

In doing this, I hold myself and my community to a higher standard of excellence and set an example for my peers to follow.

### Course Requirements – What and Why

The requirements in the course are unlike any other course at American University. Why do we have these course requirements? As part of accepting and participating in STEP you are engaging in



seven weeks of foundational materials that equips you in the necessary transition into American University that aids in your ongoing success in your academics and social engagement. Each of you has chosen to equip yourself with this STEP experience at American University. As in each community, we all have responsibilities to each other and to the work we do. When you are reading the requirements below, take a moment to think about the rationale and importance of each requirement and how it relates to the work you will do as a part of the STEP Experience as well as the American community.

## Attendance

Just as attendance is important in your class obligations, it is important in this experience. Attendance will be accounted for every class and workshop we have planned that you are present and engaged in. When a member of the group is not present, a few things happen. The group dynamics change – the group is not the same when even one person is missing. In addition, when you are not present, you miss valuable learning, and your group members miss learning from you. Therefore, attendance is required and will be taken during every class and workshop.

It is one's responsibility to ensure that you can attend all class/workshops sessions. One absence is permitted. If you are going to miss a session, you must notify (by email) the Assistant Director for Student Success, Transition, and Retention 24 hours before the day of that session. Failure to make prior notification of an absence may have the consequence of a grade reduction resulting from missing participation points during class/workshop or, in egregious circumstances, termination of your ability to continue with STEP. As a reminder, to successfully move through the STEP Experience participants need to have earned a final grade of "C" or better.

### *Protocol for Facilitators When a Student Misses Class (NOT in Student Syllabus)*

- Students are allowed one (1) absence (*e.g., conference for their major, family wedding, family emergency, etc.*). Unexcused absences are exempt from participation points that day but must submit all materials due for the class before their absence. Any assignments not submitted prior to class are considered late.
- *Faculty, in collaboration with the STEP Leadership Team, are responsible for keeping track of students' attendance.* When a student reaches a 2nd unexcused absence, faculty will contact the student in collaboration with STEP Leadership Team within 24 hours to talk with the student about why they missed class. Following that conversation, the Assistant Director for Success, Transition, & Retention will make note and will handle any additional follow-up including to necessary parties.
- After the 2nd unexcused absence, the Assistant Director sends standard email to student letting them know that missing another class may result in a 10% reduction to their overall course grade, along with a reminder that the final course grade needs to be a C or better.

## Assignments

Within the STEP Experience you will be asked to complete assignments on your courses. To receive credit for the class, these writing assignments must be completed and be done well. To help you understand what is meant by "be done well," here are some points that faculty will look for in all written work, and if the following are not met, faculty may deduct points or, when appropriate, ask you to revise and resubmit a product that is more complete prior to receiving credit.

Work is well done when it:

- Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments should be typed using 12 pt. font, double-spaced, and edited for proper grammar and spelling.
- Shows a sincere effort was made.
- It has depth with specifics and details.
- Addresses and/or answers all assignment questions and tasks.
- Articulates reflection and an awareness of growth.
- Connects class material (large group activities, discussions, readings, and videos) with your own experience and ideas.
- Questions oneself and questions course material (asking “why” and “what”)
- Recognizes and names contradictions in one’s own and/or others’ thinking.
- When working in a group, ensuring that all members have a voice and work is distributed equally.
- Incorporates the readings:
  - Formulates an idea using quotes and proper citation (when appropriate) to support.
  - Thoroughly analyzes quotes/ideas, agrees, or disagrees.
  - Addresses how articles relate or intersect with each other and the classroom activities/discussions.

### Late Assignment Policy

It is expected that all assignments will be turned in on time as indicated in the syllabus. Late assignments result in a 10% automatic deduction from the total points of the assignment per day. Any request for an assignment extension is at the faculty's discretion. Faculty have final say on approval or denial of all extension requests. If timely work is an ongoing issue, CDI will meet with you to plan for the remainder of the STEP Experience so these concerns can be avoided as you continue. Faculty may reserve the right not to accept late assignments depending on the circumstances and in collaboration with the discussion with your STEP support network.

### Participation

Each class you are present and an active participant in all individual and group activities. Everyone’s voice is important, and it is important for all of us to learn to listen and stay engaged. To meet this goal, faculty will pay attention to participation during your class time and will follow-up with class members when feedback is helpful. Participation means being prepared, engaged, listening, and contributing meaningfully during discussions. If faculty feel you are not participating, they will discuss it with you. If they feel that this does not help, they will ask the STEP Professional Staff to speak with you and plan for the remainder of the experience.

### Grading Scale

Exemplary	Good	Acceptable	Unacceptable
A   94% - 100%	B+   87%-89%	C+   77%-79%	C-   70%-72%
A -   90%-93%	B   83%-86%	C   73%-76%	D   65%-69%
	B-   80%-82%		F   Under 65%

**Successful completion of the STEP Experience requires a grade of C or higher.**

### Plagiarism

Students should be aware of their own responsibilities in appropriately quoting and citing sources used. Students should be aware that the University has access to software designed to detect

plagiarized passages and work. This software will be applied randomly or at the faculty's discretion. Detection of plagiarized passages or work can result in disciplinary action.

## Additional Helpful Resources

### Technical Support

AU is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty that prevents a student from completing a time-sensitive assessment activity, Instructors may extend deadlines and provide appropriate accommodation based on the situation. For technical support help with canvas, student can access the Learning Support Services "Student Support Topics" site.

### AU Help Desk (focuses on all other IT issues)

Answers to your technology questions are just an e-mail, instant message, or phone call away. Contact the IT Help Desk at 202-885-2550, [helpdesk@american.edu](mailto:helpdesk@american.edu), or AskAmericanUHelp to reach one of our professional staff who can answer your questions and provide general troubleshooting assistance. Students can also log on to the OIT (Office of Information Technology) Help Desk portal for support.

### Academic Support Services

Academic Coaching offers free one-on-one meetings where learners work with academic coaches to identify and enhance academic strategies. Students may schedule one 30-minute academic coaching session per week. Sessions are interactive and learners can expect to leave with a strategic action plan. Our year-round services are open to all degree-seeking AU learners, undergraduate and graduate. Virtual Sessions are held at Zoom, Monday-Friday. You will receive a zoom link the day of your session. Digital resources can be found in our online Resource Library, and hard copies can be found on the resource wall outside of MGC (Mary Graydon Center) 243. (Schedule appointments on the Academic Coaching You Can Book Me, [academiccoaching@american.edu](mailto:academiccoaching@american.edu))

Mathematics & Statistics Tutoring Lab provides free drop-in tutoring and scheduled one-on-one tutoring appointments to American University students for exam review, homework assignments, and understanding concepts. The Lab tutors Mathematics concepts up to Calculus II and Statistics concepts up to Intermediate Statistics. (Or Schedule tutoring appointments on WC Online)

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a free group tutoring program that supports historically challenging courses in disciplines such as accounting, biology, chemistry and economics. SI Leaders facilitate weekly group review sessions that reiterate course content. In your one- or two-hour session, an SI Leader can assist with learning course concepts, facilitating group learning, and sharing best strategies for studying and note taking. ([siprogram@american.edu](mailto:siprogram@american.edu))

The ASAC (Academic Support & Access Center) Tutoring Lab provides free one-on-one and drop-in tutoring for selected courses in disciplines such as accounting, biology, chemistry, and economics. In your 30 minute or hour appointment, a peer tutor can assist with understanding course content, providing hands-on practice, and discussing best strategies for studying. (Schedule tutoring appointments on WC Online - [tutoring@american.edu](mailto:tutoring@american.edu))

Writing Center offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute

session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the Student Support Syllabus: Fall 2022 AUx1: CORE-100/101 Page 23 conventions of academic writing and learn how to revise and edit your own work. (Schedule tutoring appointments on WC Online - 202-885-2991)

## Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

AU is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for qualified students with disabilities. The ASAC assists students with disabilities and promotes full participation in academic programs and other campus activities. Students are not required to notify the university or any of its offices or personnel of a disability either prior to or after admission; however, if a student plans to request accommodation, documentation of the disability must be provided. As accommodation is not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended. To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360 or [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu). For more information, visit AU's Getting Started with Disability Accommodations webpage.

## Disability Accommodations Process at AU

To receive disability accommodations for the first time at American University, you must register with the Academic Support and Access Center by submitting documentation and completing the three-step process outlined below.

### *The Three-Step Process*

- Complete and return the Student Accommodations Questionnaire (SAQ).
- Submit documentation of your disability. See guidelines below. (Documentation may be uploaded as part of Step 1.)
- You will be assigned a Disability Access Advisor who will review your documentation and contact you at your AU (American University) student email when it is time to schedule your intake appointment, or additional materials are needed. Documentation review typically takes 1-2 weeks; however, review may be longer during high volume times, such as the summer months. For fall admits, typically review of accommodations begins after the spring semester has concluded.

Steps 1 & 2 should be completed by the respective priority deadlines. A confirmation email will be sent to the student upon successful submission of Steps 1 & 2. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please contact our office ASAP. Documentation submitted after the priority deadlines will be reviewed promptly, but accommodation decision-making and implementation cannot be guaranteed by the beginning of the semester.

Once Steps 1 & 2 have been completed, the student will be notified by an ASAC Disability Access Advisor regarding the decision. If accommodations are approved, the decision is provisional pending completion of Step 3. Step 3 should be completed during the first few weeks of the semester. Please note, if additional documentation/information is needed students will be contacted by a Disability Access Advisor at their AU student email. Review of documentation typically takes 1-2 weeks; however, review may be longer during high volume times, such as the summer months.

## A STEP Conclusion... a Beginning

You have chosen to start your academic career with a little help from CDI by being a part of STEP, we are honored and privileged to assist you in your transition to American University. As you have had time in these past seven weeks to create a foundation that will hopefully empower and equip you with the necessary skills to not only make it through your first year of college but through your entire time at AU and beyond.

With that, this supportive journey does not stop here. Throughout your time at American University, you have opportunities to lean on CDI by participating in periodic workshops, academic check-ins and many other types of engagement that we feel will be pivotal for your continuous development as college student and young adult at American University. Be sure to stay connected with the STEP leadership team to remain aware of all things happening within STEP!