University Life

First-Gen+ Center

“Serving the first-generation community at Mason, including students who are first-gen *and* undocumented, have refugee status, and those who have families with limited income.”

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History of First-Gen+ Center

1. Student Transition Empowerment Program (STEP) began in 1990 as the Summer Transition Program (STP).

2. STEP became a part of University Life in 2005 within the Office of Diversity Programs and Services (ODPS).

3. What was ODPS became the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education (ODIME).

4. ODIME merged with LGBTQ+ Resources in 2017, leading to the beginnings of the Student Access and Equity (SAE) area.

5. SAE grew to include STEP, a First-Gen Living Learning Community (partnered with Housing and Residence Life), a First-Gen Peer Mentoring Program, and in 2019 included undocumented student services and UndocuAlly Training.

6. In 2021, the decision was made to launch a new department.
The term *first-generation college student* applies to those students whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) either:

- Did not receive or complete any level of post-secondary education
- Enrolled at or earned a two-year degree from a community college
- Earned any level of post-secondary education outside the United States.

*Note: Mason does not currently gather data on graduate students or faculty and staff. However, there are active communities who gather from these groups!*
Who we serve

First-Generation Community
- U.S. Citizens
- Undocumented Students
- Refugee Students
- Limited Income Students

Students

Faculty & Staff

Community Members
Our Work

The First-Gen+ Center serves as an accessible starting point for students (and their families) to understand and connect with relevant university resources. The team prioritizes data to better understand the student experience and proactively works toward improving the campus to be “first-gen ready” and “undocufriendly” throughout each university area. We work to enhance the collegiate experience through services, programs, policy awareness, and educating the campus community.

Staff on the team collaborate across campus and beyond, in order to streamline resources and supports for students, including participating at local and national levels to share practical and scholarly content as a catalyst for institutions to broaden their work.
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<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Programs &amp; Initiatives</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Early admit STEP recruitment</td>
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<td>• First-Gen Week</td>
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<td>• First-Gen Peer Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Programs &amp; Initiatives</th>
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<td>• STEP application opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>• First-Gen Graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• STEP Graduation</td>
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<th>Summer</th>
<th>Programs &amp; Initiatives</th>
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<tr>
<td>• STEP Summer (6-week program)</td>
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Task Forces

• First-Generation Student Task Force (co-led with EIP and College of Science)
• Undocumented Student Task Force

Policy and Data

• STEP Retention
• Federal and State Policy for Undocumented Students

Training

• UndocuAlly Training (3 sessions offered each Fall and Spring)
Stay Connected!

Social Media: @FGPCMason

Visit: SUB I, Suite 2400

Contact: firstgen@gmu.edu

Learn More: FIRSTGEN.GMU.EDU